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A Journal of Opinion

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The Leader Speaks

Hitler's speech on the anniversary of his coming to power was scanned abroad mainly for intimations of what was in his mind. Three messages stood out—one of reassurance to the Italians, one intended to scare this country so as to minimize help to Britain, especially by shipping, and a general boost to Axis prestige through his confident prophecy of victory this spring. One other note, though arousing less comment, was significant—his sarcasm at the effort of Britain to solve her social problems during the war, with the statement that Germany had done so before war began. This was a direct appeal to the revolutionary sentiment of the masses everywhere, with an eye on the Soviet Union, and indicates that fulfilment of social and economic democracy would in the end be as powerful a weapon against Nazism as planes and ships. There is nothing Hitler fears more.

The rest of the speech is put aside as backward-looking repetition of Hitler's familiar themes about the Versailles Treaty and the suppression of post-war Germany. But to ignore it would be a mistake of the first order. It was chiefly these arguments that brought Hitler to power and now justify the war to the German mind. They prove again, if any proof were needed, how necessary it is for Britain to clear herself of all suspicion of imperialist designs and declare peace aims that would support those Germans who eventually must be depended upon to desert Hitler and his cause.

Gas or Terror

In his speech Hitler promised a surprise for the British when he assaults them, a "blue cloud." Rumors have become current that he will use more terrible weapons of warfare, such as poison gas or disease germs. Hitler's former assurance that he would not employ gas before his enemies did serves merely to increase the alarm, for he is expert at inventing pretexts. Yet this is the sort of anxiety that was current before last spring's great offensive. When the battle came, not a single new arm of physical destruction was employed. The "secret weapon" turned out to be the psychological offensive intended to undermine the opposing soldiers' confidence by every possible means, including the apparently childish device of frightening them by whirling rattles and screaming dive-bombers.

Whatever may be Hitler's plans for the invasion, we are justified in putting down these rumors as part of a new psychological offensive. The German army may indeed use gas bombs, but there is no reason to reverse the judgment of military experts that their actual lethal effect would be less great or widespread than that of high explosives or fire. No known method of spreading disease germs could equal the processes of nature in backward or tropical countries, where after all great populations survive. And such methods are likely to infect those who use them. Surely we know enough by this time not to be terrified by the old propaganda tricks.

Pétain Weakens

In spite of Pétain's repeated assurances that he would stick to the terms of the armistice, refuse to enter the war against a former ally, and keep the French navy independent, he has at length been compelled to accept Laval, Hitler's man, as the chief power in his Cabinet. What is to prevent the Nazis from

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going on from this victory to achievement of everything they want in France? Certainly neither a sense of honor nor any power of Pétain or other Frenchmen on French soil to resist. In nation after nation Hitler has used native traitors to conquer from within.

But the Vichy government has one ace in the hole if it wants to use it. This probably has enabled Pétain to hold out this long. It is what France can do outside French soil. The navy could sail away and engage the enemy. Weygand, with his powerful army in North Africa, could attack the Axis. One would think this implied threat would be enough to stop Hitler short of forcing a pliant "French" government to be his open ally. Whether Pétain and Weygand are really prepared to make it good is a test of their sincerity. We are not optimistic, for this would have been as good an occasion as any to play the card. If Pétain still believes, as he did last summer, that Hitler can conquer Britain in a few months, no matter what help she may receive, he probably will take no bold action.

Good Sense from the USCC

One of the bright spots of the past week is the thoroughly sensible report of the Committee on Manufactures of the United States Chamber of Commerce, on anti-strike legislation. The committee takes note of the fact that powerful interests are now trying to get laws enacted that will forbid strikes in defense industries. It opposes any such measure.

In the first place, the committee feels that these laws violate fundamental rights of citizens. Second, it believes there is no necessity for any such thing. Labor and employers in the defense industries are on the whole coöperating admirably, it says. The press is greatly overplaying whatever disputes do occur, putting big black headlines on the stories and apparently trying to build up a lynch-sentiment against labor in the community. But in fact, the committee says, disputes are being successfully and promptly settled about 99 percent of the time. Third, the middle of an emergency is no time to try to rewrite the labor policy of the United States. The committee might have added that experience all over the world indicates that attempts to increase production by force are of no avail, except possibly if you are prepared to shoot people for failure to obey, and even then the results are doubtful.

In the past, we have not often found occasion to agree with the report of any committee of the USCC. This one is so sensible that our hat is in the air. We only hope that the Chamber as a whole will prove as wise as its special committee.

Getting Tough with Mr. Ford

Henry Ford's medieval labor policy has at last been recognized even in the War Department. After giving him two contracts totaling about $125,000,000, the Department has refused him a third, for $10,000,000, on the ground of his determination not to obey state and national labor laws. The government is paying a Chrysler subsidiary $250,000 more than the Ford bid for almost 12,000 trucks. We welcome the news that Ford's ugly anti-labor attitude has at last received official recognition in Washington; but before we cheer too loudly, we'd like a little additional information. If this third contract is illegal, why isn't that also true of the two previous ones? What about other anti-union employers who are getting fat jobs out of the defense program? We surmise that the War Department may have thrown one sop to public opinion without at all altering its own past anti-labor policy. Both the War and Navy Departments have for years gone to great lengths to fight the Walsh-Healey Act, which requires government contractors to obey the labor laws. We'll need a little more evidence to believe that either department has really reformed.

The Court Moves Forward

No one is surprised that the Supreme Court has upheld the wages-and-hours law; it was taken for granted that this would be done. Nevertheless, the day deserves to be marked with a white stone. The Court in clear and ringing tones has reaffirmed its recent attitude of social progress. Interstate commerce is wholly within the control of Congress. That control can be based on social and moral arguments. Regional decisions fixing minimum wages in specified interstate industries are legal. The solicitude for property rights which caused the Court, in 1918, to overthrow the federal child-labor law no longer reigns. Congress could pass this law over again tomorrow and it would be sustained. In fact, however, those fighting against child labor will probably prefer to push the constitutional amendment, which now lacks only eight states of the necessary three-fourths majority. Only 25 percent of child labor is in interstate industries, and the constitutional amendment would protect all types. Once again the Court has affirmed its new belief that the welfare of all Americans takes precedence over the property rights of a few.

Unions and the Sherman Act

No aspect of labor-union affairs causes so much public resentment as jurisdictional disputes which produce strikes. To the lay mind it seems outrageous that an employer who is willing to meet union terms completely, and has perhaps signed a contract to that effect, should be penalized because of a quarrel between groups of workers over which unions should perform certain jobs. Nevertheless, the issue is a real one and deserves public understanding. While jurisdictional disputes sometimes result in perpetuating narrow craft monopolies, they also offer workers their best chance of escaping from corrupt or backward leadership. Minorities in labor have the same right to be heard, and to become majorities if they can through the ex-

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ercise of "power politics," that is available to other groups in American life.

The Supreme Court followed sound social policy, it seems to us, in ruling this week that jurisdictional disputes between unions are not controlled by the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Such strikes normally do not constitute a conspiracy in respect to prices or other situations the Sherman law was intended to cover. As the Court pointed out in its five-to-two opinion, jurisdictional struggles have played an important part in the development of labor unions both of the craft and industrial type. Congress has twice, in the Clayton and Norris-LaGuardia Acts, restricted the applicability of the Sherman law to trade unions. If it should wish to restrict jurisdictional strikes, it must say so in the form of new legislation. We hope it won't; we do not believe such legislation could be framed without gravely invading the rights of American citizens.

Japan Looks South

The fighting between Thailand and French Indo-China has more or less stopped, under pressure from Japan. Part of the settlement is an agreement whereby Japan gets the use of naval and air bases in Indo-China which, when developed, will put her in a far more advantageous position to attack Singapore and the Dutch East Indies than at present; one naval base, not far from Manila in a westerly direction, is only 800 miles from Singapore and 1,200 miles from the Dutch East Indies. This sounds alarming, but need not prove so. Naval and air bases cannot be improvised overnight and especially by a country in as much trouble as Japan at the present time. And even if the Japanese were to capture Singapore and control of the Dutch possessions, she would have to give them back if England won the war. Like everything else in the world, the solution of the Far Eastern question depends on the outcome of the Battle of Britain.

Realism about Russia

There was never such a delicately balanced diplomatic game as Great Britain and the United States are now playing with Russia. They want to do everything they can to keep her from giving any more economic aid than at present to Germany. They think Stalin is already exercising a powerful negative influence on Hitler in the Balkans and hope for more in the future. Russia has recently greatly expanded her purchases of several materials from the United States, notably cotton, and although this may be partly to take the place of goods she previously bought elsewhere, it seems pretty clear that some of these goods enable similar items to be sent to Germany, thus breaking the British blockade.

In their anxiety to keep Russia in line, and at the same time not to let her help Germany economically, England and America first smile and then frown. This country raises the "moral embargo" on airplane shipments, on the ground that the Finns, murdered from the skies, are now thoroughly cold in their graves; then only a few days later, we take steps toward additional licensing and restricting shipments of various products. The one thing that is certain in the whole matter is that Stalin will take no action of any kind that is designed to help either Germany or England unless it is also intended to help Russia. He fears both contestants in the war; he cares no more for bourgeois democracy as a principle than he does for fascism. Efforts to make him a friend will fail if they are based on anything else than sharply practical considerations.

The Wooden Bomb

It used to be that the British secret service was a model to be imitated by every other European country. That has scarcely been the case in the present war, at least not during the first nine months of it. Obviously the secret service failed to report what the Germans were going to do, or where and when they were going to do it, or with what overwhelming forces—or if such reports were made, the British Cabinet either did not believe or refused to act on them. This failure was largely caused by the political miscalculations of the ruling Tory clique. Chamberlain and his associates made the mistake of trusting the minor princelings and army officers who pretended to be opposing Hitler from the Right. The result was that English agents got little information—and also that several of them were betrayed to the Gestapo.

But things have changed in this field as well as others since Churchill became Prime Minister. Whereas the invasion of Norway had been one of the greatest defeats that the English secret service ever suffered, the unsuccessful invasion of Greece was probably one of its triumphs. Mussolini's plans were apparently known in London long before they were published in Rome. The British also seem to keep their eyes on the Italian fleet, no matter where it hides—as witness the successful attack on Taranto, followed by the arrest in Italy of twenty-six alleged "traitors and spies." There were British bombers over Catania, in Sicily, almost as soon as the first German planes reached the airfield. And in northern Europe, too, the work of the secret service has been improving. Information is now being transmitted from the invaded countries, and from Polish, Czech and Belgian workers drafted into German factories. One story from Holland is typical of many, though we won't swear to the truth of it. The Germans, we are told, tried to play a trick on British bombing planes by constructing a complete dummy airfield, with its hangars, anti-aircraft guns and planes all made of wood and canvas. The day after the field was finished, a British plane flew over it and dropped a single bomb —also made of wood.

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Announcement

We take pleasure in announcing that Mr. Julian Huxley has become a Contributing Editor of The New Republic.

News Notes of a Week

Resignation of three Cuban colonels, including the Chief of Staff of the army and the Chief of Police, for "sedition," was forced by President Batista. The presidential palace was heavily guarded and news was censored. . . . News of an indescribably horrible pogrom by Iron Guardists, as part of their recent uprising, came from Rumania. More than 1,000 Jews were tortured and murdered in Bucharest. . . . An understanding between the United States and Australia and New Zealand, whereby the United States would have the use of South Pacific ports and airfields when and if needed, was reported from Wellington. Washington wouldn't talk. . . . The British occupied Barentu in Eritrea and pressed further into Ethiopia from Kenya. One hundred thousand Italians were in a dangerous trap between the jaws of the British pincer movement. . . . A Bolivian demand for freedom to move goods across the territories of neighboring countries deadlocked the River Plate Regional Conference at Montevideo. . . . Premier Metaxas of Greece died suddenly.

Former Senator William Gibbs McAdoo died at the age of seventy-seven. His shift of Garner votes in 1932 clinched the Democratic nomination for FDR. . . . S. O. Levinson, a Chicago lawyer who proposed in The New Republic the plan which was finally adopted as the Kellogg-Briand Pact, also died. . . . The New York Times printed a border in color on its Sunday Magazine Section. Is this the Revolution?

Lease-Lend Revisions

THE LEASE-LEND BILL will pass; the important question is how soon and with what modifications. Passage without change of a word or a comma three months or even six weeks from now might be worth less than passage in a few days with alterations. The President has therefore been wise to consult with congressional leaders and consent to changes that do not alter the essence of the measure. Other amendments will be offered in both House and Senate. So that merely obstructive or delaying suggestions may be sifted from those that might reasonably be considered, it is well to examine the more prominent suggestions:

Time Limitation.—Democracies have frequently had to delegate to their chief executives in periods of crisis far more dictatorial powers than this bill conveys. But the ultimate safeguard of democracy is the placing of a time limit on the powers delegated. The President has himself consented to a two-year limit; there is *nothing* against and everything for this change.

Money Limitation.—It is argued that by passage of this bill Congress will lose its constitutional power over the purse. It may, to be sure, pass or defeat appropriations to finance any new purchases for Britain from private industry. But the President may lend weapons or ships already belonging to the government, and Congress would be under irresistible pressure to make good any deficiency in our own forces. Thus the President would in effect decide how much Congress must appropriate for helping Britain.

This, in our opinion, is a technical debating point of use only to enemies of the purpose of the bill. To place a money limitation on the aid the President may extend might easily cause that aid to come to an end at the time when it was most needed, and in effect duplicate the situation which gave rise to the present bill. Congress should decide the question now, and not have to debate it all over again at an undetermined time in the future. The amount of aid, from the point of view of defense from imminent danger, should be decided by the need and not by what it would cost.

Money Substitute.—Senator Taft and other members of the regular Republican opposition favor a substitute which would merely authorize a loan (or gift) of a fixed amount of money to Britain. This proposal ignores the time urgency. It would help Britain next fall or winter, but not soon, since it would merely enable her to order more goods to be manufactured. The bill as it stands permits the lending or leasing of existing defense equipment, which may turn the scales when Hitler tries to crush his enemy before our maximum production can become effective. Senator Taft and Representative Martin by this amendment might present victory to Hitler.

Specifying Nations.—There are proposals to specify in this bill that aid under it should go to Britain only, and that the President should not be permitted to aid non-specified countries suffering from aggression without further congressional action. We do not see the gain of such an amendment. Is there doubt in anybody's mind as to which nations are suffering from aggression and need help? Would the President pick some beneficiary to which the country was hostile? And if the Axis is a unit, and our object is to check the danger it creates for the United States, what objection can there possibly be to aiding China and Greece as well as Britain? Or Turkey or Bulgaria, if they should be attacked? Our power to aid them promptly might prevent the attack.

Report to Congress.—Congress, it is argued, has a right to know how the powers it has delegated are

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being exercised. If it disapproves, it may wish to rescind the powers. Mr. Roosevelt has consented to an amendment requiring periodical reports to Congress, except for military secrets. This is an excellent accompaniment of broad delegation of powers. If it were not for the danger of delaying this bill by a complex new measure, we should favor going even further in the same direction. Long ago we suggested that the gulf in foreign policy between Congress and the President be bridged by a standing Congressional Committee which should be kept continuously informed of our foreign policy, and should pass upon any important new development in it.

Check by Army and Navy Chiefs.—Some of our legislators are afraid that the President will impulsively give away articles needed for our own defense, and have therefore proposed that his powers under the bill be restricted by a veto residing with the Chief of Staff of the army and Chief of Operations of the navy. This is an absurd proposal, since the President is constitutionally, and should remain, commander-in-chief of the army and navy. Why give a veto power to his subordinates? It would be meaningless unless Congress at the same time protected those holding it from removal from office. That would be equivalent to setting up military control of a vital element of foreign policy. It is not the function of the army or navy to exercise final decision concerning what is necessary for our defense, or the best use of our armed forces. Mr. Roosevelt has consented to a clause specifying that he consult these gentlemen; he doubtless would do so without any instructions on the subject.

Forbidding Purchases from Other Nations.—One proposal, while allowing the President to lend or lease our equipment abroad, would forbid him to buy or accept in exchange any war articles from other nations. That sounds like sheer insanity. It is quite conceivable that the belligerents we are to aid might have something well worth accepting in trade. The proposal seems either like an attempt to sabotage the bill or an attempt to boost the profits of domestic munitions makers.

Britain Must Put up Security.—Some argue that while Britain may lack ready cash, she has plenty of property of one kind or another which could be pledged as security for the debts she may now incur. Therefore it is proposed that she be required to put up security for loans or leases of armament, unless it is proved that security can no longer be furnished. That would be a good proposal for a business dicker, provided we were not already convinced that war debts are extremely unlikely to be paid, no matter what the security. But we are not engaged in a business deal. We are engaged in defending the United States. There is every reason to avoid the haggling, delay and red tape that the proposal might involve.

No Convoys.—Perhaps the biggest fear concerning the bill is that under it—since it would permit the President to ignore previous legislation in carrying out its terms—he might violate the Neutrality Act by sending American ships to Britain and convoying them with American warships. Hitler then would torpedo them and we should find ourselves at war.

As is pointed out in our Washington Notes, though the President accepted an amendment specifying that nothing in the bill should be so construed as to permit this action, he constitutionally has the power to take it anyway, as head of the navy. Convoying merchant shipping in danger from an illegal blockade is not technically an act of war.

We believe the occasion is not likely to arise. It takes time and training to organize convoys. It would be both simpler and more efficient to turn over to Britain any spare merchant ships and the necessary destroyers, cruisers or other craft, and let her keep on with the duty she has so efficiently performed so far. Our own navy need not be involved as such unless Britain suffered such losses of personnel in her navy, air force or merchant fleet as to necessitate a call on our manpower as well. That time is not in sight.

Furthermore, we do not believe Hitler will make war on this nation unless or until he conquers Britain, no matter what we may do. It is not his habit to take on more than one adversary at a time, if he can help it.

Alcoa Comes into Court

THE Aluminum Company of America, which keeps insisting how pure and noble it is, in the face of all detractors, will now have a chance to prove its high spiritual qualities in court. A Federal Grand Jury has indicted Alcoa and five other firms for violating the Sherman law in regard to the production and sale of magnesium. This is an important metal, one-third lighter than aluminum and in powdered form highly inflammable, so much so that it is used in incendiary bombs. Because of its light weight it is also used in airplanes, bomb casings and parachute flares, among other things. The government charges Alcoa with conspiring with the I. G. Farbenindustrie, the German dye trust, the Dow Chemical Company and three other firms wholly or partly owned or controlled by Alcoa and IGF. It is said that because of these monopolistic practices, Germany has been given a four-to-one advantage over the United States in magnesium, our airplane program is lagging and our defense efforts correspondingly reduced.

If the government is right, these six corporations have controlled, among them, all the basic patents on

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the production and fabrication of magnesium. Nobody else could make it, and these firms could and did restrict output and fix prices. Alcoa, it is charged, kept the production of magnesium low because it was a dangerous competitor with the company's own chief product—aluminum. It did so in spite of the fact that even before the war, Germany produced more magnesium than England, France and the United States combined. She now has the French production as well, making the disparity even greater.

In modern industrial history there are a good many cases where the search for profits has caused American business firms to coöperate with foreign companies to the great disadvantage of the United States. This has been especially true in the armament industry, as the Nye investigation abundantly proved. People like Mr. Willkie, who insist on the glories of unrestricted private enterprise, never say a word about this sort of thing. The trial of the magnesium case will be watched by the public with keen interest for the light it will throw on what happens when patriotism and profits come into conflict.

A Question for Canada

Is it possible for people whose ideal is decent, democratic behavior to build up and use their military strength yet continue to act toward one another in a spirit of democratic fairness and decency?

Nothing has so well rewarded the people of America for the military aid they have given to the British people or more effectively strengthened their desire to increase that aid, as signs from England that the answer can be Yes. Americans remember their own behavior during the World War and especially during the years after the war, their "Hardboiled Smith" and his military prison in Paris, their Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and his "Red Raids," their American Legion mobbings, their deportations based on spite, hearsay and panic. They do not wish to repeat the whole sad story.

In Canada, the answer to the question seems dangerously like No. Under the Defense of Canada Regulations about 1,500 people have been interned. *Habeas corpus* does not appear to be applicable in their cases. Only two committees for the whole of Canada, consisting of one man each, can hear appeals. The burden of disproving a case rests on the interned person and proceedings resemble a police investigation, not a trial. As always under such procedure, labor leaders find themselves in jail. J. A. Sullivan, president of the Canadian Seamen's Union, was interned because of "representations" that he was a member of the Communist Party and an appeal for a writ of *habeas corpus* was denied. No details were supplied as to who made the representations or what proof was available to support them. In the province of Ontario alone, seventy trade-union leaders are reported to be in custody.

It is an offense against the Regulations to make even casual statements in conversation "likely" to cause disaffection or to be prejudicial to recruiting, in spite of the lack of any guilty intent. Some 400 persons have been prosecuted for making such vaguely defined remarks. A new interpretation of the word "loiter" threatens to abolish the right of peaceful picketing in two-thirds of Canada's industrial plants. At Windsor, forty-five Chrysler employees were convicted of "loitering" when they attempted to picket the plant in protest against a lock-out. The conviction, in a magistrate's court, was sustained on appeal. The appellant judge, Mr. Justice Hogg, admitting that the Regulation in question had been drafted to prevent spying, none the less found the employees, "alleged" to have been on strike, guilty of loitering under the terms of the act, in one of those flights of hard judicial fancy that bring goose-flesh to the spines of plain people interested in plain freedom. Even the privileges of a member of parliament have been infringed upon. Police officials visited house after house throughout the province of Saskatchewan, asking for copies of a leaflet printed by Mrs. Dorise W. Nielson, M. P. The leaflet was a condensation of her speech in the budget debate criticizing economic conditions.

This is more like fascist than democratic behavior, and many Canadians recognize the fact. Colonel George Drew, leader of the Conservative opposition in the Ontario legislature, is among those who have denounced many of the Regulations, and The Toronto Globe and Mail has said editorially that these arbitrary powers "make a mockery of the fundamental rights for whose preservation brave young men are dying." A committee will examine the Regulations when Parliament reconvenes on February 17, and the Civil Liberties Association of Toronto will ask specific amendments. Canada can aid the United States, and surely herself as well, by making the answer to the question we have asked above a resounding Yes.

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Ground Plan for a Post-War World[1]

WHILE a war is in progress, everyone assumes that it will last forever; but this has not been true in the past and is unlikely to be true in the future. Even the present war will come to an end some day. What sort of world shall we then be living in?

It is obvious that the answer to this depends in turn on how the war comes out. If Hitler should win decisively, we shall be in a world for which we need not plan; that will be done in Berlin for us, and we won't like it. If the war should turn into a stalemate of exhaustion, the chances are that the following "peace" will be no more than another armistice like the interval from 1918 to 1939. If, however, the war ends in the only way that Great Britain or America could consider a victory: with the overthrow of fascism in Germany and Italy and an awakening from the long nightmare the world has undergone, what then? We do not propose here to discuss the general question of war aims and peace terms; but we do wish to bring forward some points in regard to international problems, primarily of a financial and economic character, that will continue to confront us after the end of the war.

There were many aspects of the pre-war world in the democracies, and in parts of the world influenced by them, to which we cannot and should not return. That was a world in which there was too much lip-service to the idea of democracy, the doctrine of equal opportunity, and much too little practice of it. It was a world in which men shut their eyes to the inherent contradictions of unrestrained private capitalist enterprise. They were not willing to take out a collective insurance policy for peace and pay the premium, nor would they put general welfare either in industry at home or among backward peoples elsewhere ahead of immediate private profits. Foreign trade and foreign investment among the native populations of Africa, South America and the Orient took on many of the aspects of undisguised gangsterism. The general policy was that which George III exerted toward the American colonists before 1776, when he dictated their economic life on terms of the greatest advantage to British finance and industry, without reference to whether the colonists liked it or not. Imperialism, whether of the Roman or British variety, has always had some positive results to show alongside the negative ones and the total heavy deficit. In specific cases and to varying extents, the exploited peoples have generally had some degree of peace. In the recent past, they have had railroads, some electric lights, sanitation and education and other odd services out of the industrialized world. But side by side with this in too many instances there has been exploitation of the inhabitants for the benefit of limited groups of people in the great exporting nations. This exploitation has not meant a positive insurance policy for freedom from want, from hunger and from fear.

In the light of our new understanding, it seems clear that the waste involved in unrestricted competition for raw materials and foreign markets must be reduced by bringing these activities under social control. We can see now, looking back, that such unrestricted competition has been a potent source of war danger for several generations.

When money is invested within a "backward" country, the largest capital expenditures come at the beginning, and almost always have to be written off, and there is usually a period of some years before any regular and substantial profit is earned. This is the period when there is the greatest danger that the investment will be jeopardized because of hostile acts—whether by legal means or extra-legal violence—of the native population or a rival exploiter. It is easy to understand, therefore, why it was that during the great era of expansion in the nineteenth century, the capitalist who sent his money abroad should have demanded that it be protected by ambassadors, ministers and consuls of his government and that the grim guns of big warships should stand behind their threatening words. But by a natural process, the grim guns of the big warships became an end in themselves, a basis of policy instead of a device for carrying it out. Naval competition between Britain and Germany during the early years of the twentieth century was an important cause of the World War. The lesson of the past teaches us that unless we can get this matter of "privately controlled empires," of foreign investment and foreign trade, under social control, the future of the world and of humanity is a gloomy one.

Just before the end of the Great War, in 1918, the Supreme Economic Council of the Allies was about to put into effect an ambitious plan for social control of this sort, as a war measure. It proposed to allocate and distribute raw materials throughout the world. The merchant shipping of the seven seas was to be pooled and utilized in the most economical and advantageous way. Foreign markets were to be apportioned, also on a basis of efficiency; each country was to produce and distribute those things for which it was best fitted, to those purchasers who were nearest. The saving that would have been made by eliminating duplicated effort

[1] This is the third of a series of editorial articles discussing various economic aspects of the war situation and post-war possibilities. The first, "Standards of Living and of Life," appeared in The New Republic of December 9, and the second, "The Alternative to Fascism," in that of December 23. – THE EDITORS

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and wasted goods and services is almost beyond calculation.[1] The way in which these plans went to pieces with the Armistice in November, 1918, should remind us that we ought to begin planning at once for the end of the present war. We should not again scrap every wartime device and organization, simply because no one has thought how they can be carried over into peacetime and adapted for the benefit of all.

Just as we can no longer afford unrestricted competition in selling goods or in extracting irreplaceable raw materials from the earth, so we can no longer permit the financiers of one country to fight those of another in the development of the exploited regions of the earth. Indeed, we now realize that the initial development in a backward country ought to be, and largely is, the sort of non-productive enterprise that is better carried on under public than under private auspices.

In any sort of decent post-war world, loans must be made primarily on a basis of the debtor's need. They must be made in an orderly way, under the operations of an international loan and banking structure fundamentally governmental in character. International loans must be carefully divided into three types—long, medium and short, with special provisions governing each type. They must not be called loans unless there is a definite assurance that they can be repaid—*i. e.*, the creditor must agree in advance to accept goods or services from the debtor if, as is almost sure to be the case, the debt can be paid in no other fashion. Finally, however "unbusinesslike" it may seem in the short view, we must manage to make these loans on such terms that they will improve the lot of the common man in the country to which the money is going.

This general problem is immediately and closely connected with that of surplus goods of all kinds. The end of any war finds a tremendous amount of activity in progress both in agriculture and industry, in many countries. War materials, food, clothing and other goods are being poured out on a vast scale. In the past it has been true that with the end of hostilities, all this machinery has been brought to a crashing halt, working grave hardships on many millions of people. It is intolerable that this should be allowed to happen again. We need to go to work at once on plans for lessening the shock of post-war demobilization. This should be done, not by slowing down the rate of production, but by transferring it from war goods to those of peace or, if they are identical, by finding new consumers to take the place of the armies in the field. We need have no fear that the world cannot use its total productive capacity, if the financial problem can only be solved—and it can be, if it is attacked with sufficient intelligence and good will. Surely the day has passed when we should any longer tolerate the spectacle of millions of people who are hungry, ragged and barefoot while in another part of the world warehouses are bursting with unsalable food, clothing and shoes.

In meeting this problem both during the war and after its end, America's surplus gold should play an important part. Including that earmarked for special purposes, we now have more than twenty-two billion dollars' worth of this hard yellow stuff buried in the ground at Fort Knox. America could do nothing better for herself and for the world than utilize this gold to set going the sort of international enterprises that are described above. We are not suggesting that the gold would be lost in the course of these activities; what we propose is an investment, not a charity. Much of the money spent through action of the United States government to put a "backward" country on its feet will probably be returned, and if this does not happen directly, it will do so indirectly. Peace and a higher standard of living, among their other advantages, mean increased opportunities for American business men and financiers.

A good parallel for what may happen in these countries is to be found in a domestic situation—what the federal government has done in the Tennessee Valley. The activities of the TVA have brought about farming of a higher type, and more and better industry, than were previously possible in that region. As a result, these farmers and factory workers are now excellent customers for all sorts of new goods and services. In the long run, even this one aspect of the great Tennessee Valley experiment would prove the whole effort a valuable one, if we could only divorce our minds from the old bad habit of making two rigid compartments in our thinking, one labeled "public investment" and the other "private enterprise," and seeing them in competitive instead of complementary terms.

If what we have said has any meaning at all, it should be clear that international activity is called for. In such activity the United States and Great Britain should of course be the prime movers, though not the exclusive ones. These two nations between them control today most of the world's merchant shipping, a great part of its liquid resources in foreign trade, vast reservoirs of experience, contacts and skill in international activity and, sad as it is to admit it, they have a monopoly of the sort of good will that would have any interest in helping the people of other lands. Both these nations have plenty of black spots in their records. In the case of Britain, for example, the imprisonment of a man like Jawaharlal Nehru in India is no longer a reflection upon Mr. Nehru but upon a democratic parliament that has signally failed to understand or to

[1] The organization of merchant shipping was just getting well under way in November, 1918. An offer was made by the British, who were in charge of the operation, to have it continue after the war for the purpose of carrying foodstuffs to the starving people of the Entente. Herbert Hoover decided, for what reason we do not know, to reject the offer, and laboriously built up his own shipping organization, which did not begin to function efficiently until after a considerable lapse of time.

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deal wisely with a highly complex situation for which it has sole responsibility. Can the United States boast to the world of its handling of the Philippine Islands, of the economy of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands or, for that matter, our own Southern states? Nevertheless it would be outrageous to assume a fatalistic, defeatist attitude that reform is impossible.

The British and Americans are in a position to begin an experiment in applied good will, but it must go much deeper and farther than merely that. There is no parochialism so stubborn as that of the man who refuses to admit that there is any real civilization except his own. We must learn to recognize and respect the culture of other peoples, to appreciate their art and literature, however alien they seem at first glance, to learn the great truth that people may differ sharply from ourselves and still have something that is well worth cultivating.

On its economic and financial side, this experiment will of course become the basis for operations embodied in written treaties. These should be made mutual and coöperative enterprises, so as to avoid the charge that they embody no more than just old-fashioned British and American imperialism operating in a new guise. It should be possible for any nation in the world to participate on equal terms in these treaties and the operations under them, provided of course that it is willing to make a sincere pledge that it will abide by "the rules of the club."

It is obvious that some difficulty will be faced in trying to persuade the governments of South America and other regions to participate in plans of this sort. In view of past history it would not be surprising if they were suspicious of the motives of the countries in which these ideas originate. They will resent any implication, real or imaginary, that they are considered in any degree inferior or objects of charity. For this and other reasons, the machinery by which these plans will be carried out should be set up with great care. Perhaps the first step would be to create an international export lending corporation; as subdivisions of this, there should be special boards for each part of the world in which it is proposed to operate. Any borrowing country should have full and equal representation on its special regional board, of such a character that no action could be taken affecting its interests against the wishes of its representatives.

In our effort to be tactful with prospective debtors, it might be well for us to recall that the United States, the richest and most powerful country in the world, has not thus far been able to solve the problem of poverty for millions of its own people—for instance, the sharecroppers and tenant farmers of the cotton area. These individuals will benefit from the sort of international action that is envisaged, quite as much as the coffee peons of Brazil or the beef *vaqueros* of the Argentine. Great Britain and the United States are not exempt from the ills that ravage the rest of the world. If they are able to take the lead, it is in part at least because of their cultural inheritance and in part because of the accidental good fortune of their position in history. In the long run, every nation the world over will be advantaged from an increased standard of living everywhere and from the hope of peace and the maintenance of civilization that such a prospect carries with it.

Lincoln's Dream

Before dawn, Good Friday, April 14, 1865

How can I tell them what it was I saw
When none of them were with me in that world?
I was alone and always am alone.
No one from earth was with me in the dream,
On the dark ship again tonight bound outward.
Or in that other dream twelve nights ago
When, with the peace assured, I slept at last,
Then seemed to wake, roused by the sound of mourning
Here in the White House, and to find it empty,
To meet with no one that the eye could see
As I went searching, till I reached a thing
Not to be shared with others till its hour.
There in the East Room, waiting, there it was:
The mourners and the silence and the soldiers.
The unearthly funeral light that blazed from nowhere.
The high-raised catafalque. The Form that lay there
With the face covered. Hid. But not from me.
I knew it. Who knew better? There I lay.
"The President is dead." No need to say so.
Though the loud burst of grief that swept the dream
Moved me to want to tell it. But to whom?
Who, of the multitudes that walk in daylight
Has understood when I have told my dreams?
They lack the gift or curse of having eyes
Or visions such as mine, that I had always,
Bloody presentments, shapes of fear and doom
That seemed to prove my kinship with the shades,
Even as a baby, staring through the chinks
At the red mists between me and the stars,
—"Bawn to see evil," old black Sam would say.

And afterwards, before I learned to read,
The grandeurs and the glooms that came about me
When fever burned the veils before me thinner . . .
The cities seen before I ever reached them . . .
The worlds and faces boiling up from darkness
At night, in mother's time . . . "There, who's that, mother?
What's the man saying?" "What man?" "With the dagger."

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"Why, Abe, there's no one there. You're seeing ghosts."
And so I was. And I have seen them since
And not less real than anything on earth
Seen with the outward eye lighted by reason.
We pioneers are superstitious people;
We live so near the edge of the unknown.
Though, if we see too much there, we can always
Look outward and fall back on common sense.
The line's as narrow as a razor edge
Between a mind well lighted and the darkness.
But what I've seen, I've seen. High noon's no clearer.
Daylight has yielded sight as well as darkness.
For I was broad awake when I saw plain
My double image in the glass at Springfield,
One face alive, the other—not the same,
A thing to turn away from as I did.
And both reflected me. I knew its meaning:
The living face foretold my four years here,
The other—what's to come. I shudder at it
But never for myself.

There's something else.
I've worn through every fear now but the worst
Only to find it growing in my sleep,
Shaped in my vision of the shadowy ship.
Ten times I've dreamed it and again tonight
Even in my broken rest finding myself
Once more on board that dim, mysterious deck,
Fixed like a part of it and sensing only
Darkness, the hid wheel and the helmsman hidden
And prow set into darkness as the ship
Moves with a giant force through the dark water,
Swift to an unknown shore. And by what star?
What is the ship? What passengers, what cargoes
Are gathered in that hold? I guess and fear
The portent, that the vessel in the dream
May be the brave and danger-blind republic
Marked for a further grief soon to be suffered—
That some new evil threatens her, the dream
Being a sad foretelling. This may be.
I see it always like a shadow cast
Before some great event. And though it often
Presages some right triumph, yet not always.
For it appeared before our victories,
Antietam, Gettysburg—but in the end
What did those victories cost us? Young men dead.
Dead on both sides. The nation's life. The flower.
And in a war that never would have been
But for blind pilots long before it struck.
So with all wars; there never yet was one
That might not, with clear vision and just action,
Have been avoided and the storm dissolved.
Yes, the republic lives, but for how long?
How long will she pursue through darkening seas
The free, unfearing course her builders laid?
What sorrows wait for her beyond the sea line?
What hidden shoals? What perils of the shallows?
Or from the bottom when the earthquakes come
Pushing up peaks with fangs unknown before?
Will she go down? Or some earth-rocking wave
Wash her free glories on far shores, to lie
Manacled on the rocks, bare to the keel
That should have kept home harbor in the storm?
Or will she ride the deluge and then drift
Slowly to some Sargasso and lie there
And in the fat backwaters grope for comfort
Through the dry rot of never setting sail,
Rusting in fears, tangled in idle calms,
Never to dare new seas or hardier ways.

But beyond all that threatens, all that strikes,
Whatever shadows, bolts, disasters, dooms
Loom from the sea or air to bring her down,
None are so dangerous as those within,
Nursed in her freedom, suffered to be here,
A thousand evils, that we may be free
Of the one greater which would make us slaves.
So it will be with every state that sails
True to the free and democratic course;
The hardest of all paths to steer upon,
The easiest assailed, yet, in the end,
The only forward track. Which, being lost,
Must then, however late, be found and followed
And life begun again. Though dangers ride
Aboard this nation, she has carried danger
Since first the seas embraced her and she stood
Free to whatever winds the sky could send.
And sailed, as now, with hazards that could sink her.
With the self-seekers, and the backward-turners
Who fought to shape her course as in these days.
With folly-chosen captains, then as now,
Swayed by the brainless will of those who place them.
With wrongs, with pilots who would sail astray.
And with blind borers hollowing out the frame.
With blazing envies, hatreds that may spread
And with their sea-fires burn her to the ocean.
All these she carries and is still afloat.
I trust the people as I trust the stars.
And if they lose the reckoning they will find it,
For they must learn and by their griefs they will,
Must learn to steer themselves, steer or be steered.
And if they lose their freedom they will find it
And, lost for times enough, they'll learn to keep it.
They've come this far and they have weathered all
But what's to come.

Or is the vision larger
And the dark ship the earth or life itself?
If so, these fears will have an end at last,
One with the breast that held them, as the vessel
Gathers my littleness and all its pain
Into that hold that bore me to this place
And with dark pointing takes me away again,
Perhaps to further shores or to some vastness
Where there may still be dawns or perhaps darkness.
But beyond that, there may be other dreams.

Is that you, John? I'm waiting for a message.
You're up too late, or early. Night's for sleep.
Boy, go lie down. I'll watch. It's not yet day.

RIDGELY TORRENCE

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Max Eastman in 1941

MAX EASTMAN, during the year just past, has published two remarkable books.[1] There is perhaps no contemporary figure whose importance is so difficult to estimate.

From 1913 to 1922, as editor of The Masses and The Liberator, Max Eastman was one of the dominant figures of the intellectual life of New York. After 1922, his reputation was in relative eclipse. In that year he went to Europe and remained there for five years. In the course of a sojourn in Russia, he became identified with the Trotskyist side of the Stalin-Trotsky split; and as a result, he was subjected after his return to a systematic vilification and boycott which was continued through the thirties when so many of the intelligentsia fell under the influence of the Stalinists. Today he is emerging again, and it is time some attempt was made to appreciate his real role and stature.

It is not the purpose of this article, however, to attempt a complete account of his career. In order to do that, it would be necessary to write a good deal of history, political and journalistic, and—what in his case is particularly important—to trace the influence of Max Eastman through the channels of his personal relations. For four years an instructor in Philosophy at Columbia, he continued to figure as a teacher even after he became editor of The Masses. He is one of those men who have a natural genius for stimulating trains of thinking and suggesting ideas in others, whose thought instead of having its complete development inside his own head and being completely contained in his own books, interfuses and interchanges in its processes with the minds of those around him, supplying lights and starting impulses in lives quite different from the teacher's own. This is not to say that there has ever been anything that could be called an Eastman school of thought: on the contrary, it is characteristic of this type of suggestive mind that it does not turn out disciples. This is a quite different kind of teaching from that of an Irving Babbitt, who must either overpower his pupil or goad him into rebellion. Yet of the many kinds of intellectuals who were young enough to learn anything at all during the decade of 1910-20, it is probable that an enormous number owe a special debt to Max Eastman—from the artist who was encouraged to draw pictures, the poet who was encouraged to write poems, for The Liberator and The Masses, to the journalist whom a conversation with Max first induced to follow out the implications of the emotions aroused by a strike. The writer of this article well remembers his having had his first introduction to psychoanalysis in a magazine article by Max—the quiet and common-sense explanation with the drawl that carried over into print and that exerted so different a persuasive power from that of the ordinary professor. The editors of The New Masses themselves whose boss behind the Kremlin walls was recently denouncing Max Eastman as "a notorious gangster" and "crook" would not have their magazine with whatever is individual in its format and its tone if Max had not created it for them.

In 1922, Max Eastman went abroad to study the Russian Revolution, and did not return till 1927. He had, as I have said, during his absence become partially forgotten in New York, and from the time of the banishment of Trotsky in 1925, the partisans of Stalin applied their pressure to make this oblivion as complete as possible. When the presence of Max Eastman among us again began to make itself felt, he seemed to wear a different aspect. This aspect was partly the invention of those political enemies of Max, who at that time ruled the radical roost. It was in the days before the Moscow frame-ups had discredited the verdicts of Communists and when it was possible to seem to back with the austere authority of Lenin the condemnation of a revolutionist who was supposed to have gone soft. And this treatment—together perhaps with the difficulties of readjustment to an American scene which had very much changed during the middle twenties—had the result of engendering in Max Eastman himself, always excessively sensitive to atmosphere, a less generous and outgoing attitude.

The Max Eastman of The Masses and The Liberator, who had appreciated and encouraged and aroused, and who had stood at the center of things, had turned into a critic on the sidelines who girded and jeered and complained, and whose preachments seemed mainly negative. "The Enjoyment of Poetry" of 1913 had communicated an exhilaration of a lover of lyric verse, and it naturally went into the hands of every teacher of English in the country who cared enough about literature to know that he had to give his students something more than the right answers to the examination questions. "The Literary Mind" of 1931, obscured by a premature old-fogeyism, made itself disagreeable at the expense of precisely the boldest and most serious of those writers who were working to carry on the great tradition of literature, and it succeeded in irritating everybody who was trying to fight the battle of Joyce and Eliot against the Philistines who were yapping at them.

And so the friend of John Reed, the inspirer of

[1] Stalin's Russia and the Crisis in Socialism, by Max Eastman. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 284 pages. $2.50.
Marxism: Is It Science?, by Max Eastman. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 394 pages. $3.

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Mike Gold, the unsuppressible editor of The Masses, claimed attention with a critique of Marxism which demonstrated by relentless analysis the Marxist inconsistencies and superstitions without conveying the revolutionary ardor which had animated Marx and Lenin and which had taken Max Eastman himself to Russia. Moreover, this man who had lent to his cause a gift of grace and charm and a power of dealing straight with threatening issues, now developed controversial manners which disquieted his admirers and which weakened the force of certain very sound things which he was trying at this time to say. In arguing with Sidney Hook or in criticizing Ernest Hemingway, he adopted a bitter or a malicious tone which the situation did not seem to warrant, and he went in for a modern variation of the old device of imputing motives by gratuitously psychoanalyzing his subjects and attempting to undermine their philosophical positions or the products of their artistic activity, by showing that they were suffering from adolescent fixations or infantile illusions of inferiority. This whole period of Max Eastman's writing was damaged by a peculiar disgruntled tone. In dealing even with those contemporary figures—Trotsky and Freud, for example—whose ideas he has courageously defended, he sounded as if he were airing a grievance, the nature of which was never made plain.

Now for a fighter, for a worker in ideas, it is dangerous, it may prove fatal to one's effectiveness, to betray that one's feelings have been hurt. The critic must remain invulnerable. When goaded, he must show himself not peevish, but indignant, with a background of scorn. This Max Eastman at his best knows how to do; and he has written a few superb polemics. But up until about the middle of the thirties he tended to fall into the querulousness of the partisan whose side has had reverses, of the prophet who has lost his public. The isolation in which Max Eastman found himself was at this time all the more complete because he did not belong even to a minority. He was as incapable of submitting politically to the imperious dictatorship of Trotsky as of subscribing to the Marxist Dialectic, and he had to forgo even the support of the leader whose obloquy and defeat he had shared.

In 1934, the murder of Sergei Kirov announced the doom of those liberalizing elements in Russia which had still made it possible for liberals abroad to give Stalin the benefit of the doubt, and precipitated the wholesale purge of the revolutionary generations which covered up the liquidation of socialism. The American intellectuals who had been depending for their ideas about Russia on the wonderfully dramatized photographs of USSR in Construction and who had been kept slightly boozy by the flattery of the League of American Writers now commenced to sober up, and the news of the Hitler-Stalin pact nipped the illusions of all but the dullest. In the scene of devastation that followed, Max Eastman, who had first published the Testament of Lenin and who had been warning people since 1925 against the tendencies which had now triumphed, was seen to tower like a stout if slightly twisted lone pine. He began to reacquire credit; people quoted him with respect again. The young no longer shrank from his contact as from a damned soul who had blasphemed the Kremlin. And Max himself seemed to muster new forces. "Stalin's Russia and the Crisis in Socialism" and "Marxism: Is It Science?" have presented what is, so far as I know, the most intelligent and searching as well as the best informed discussion of the implications of the Marxist movement and the development of the Revolution in Russia that has yet appeared in English.

Let us, however, for a moment look back over the whole sequence of Max Eastman's books during this period of his partial eclipse. A glance into "The Literary Mind" today reveals, rather surprisingly to one who was prejudiced against the book when it first appeared, that it was distinguished by a deeper comprehension of the real issues raised by contemporary literature than almost anything that had been written during the twenties. The end of the twenties was marked by a hullabaloo of esthetic crankery, philosophical pedantry and academic moralizing; and Max Eastman was almost alone in his attempt to work out as an enlightened modern man the larger relations of art and science to one another, and of both to the society behind them. It is significant of Max Eastman's demand for clarity of understanding that, though rather unsympathetic with Joyce, he should have interviewed him in Paris and brought back the only straight story of what he was trying to do in "Finnegans Wake." The account of this interview in "The Literary Mind" is more valuable to the student of Joyce than much of the stuff that was written by his admirers.

When we go back to Max Eastman's own poetry, published that same year in a collected edition, we realize that he had a better right than the young people of that era allowed him to talk to them about what poetry ought to be. His verse has perhaps never been brought to the high pitch of craftsmanship and intensity that produces the perfect poem; and it indulges certain deplorable vices. Max Eastman has never quite got away from the sentimental and amateurish poetry that dominated the field in America during the nineties of the last century and the first decade of this. He still tends to hover around the precincts of the magazine mausoleum of Stedman's "American Anthology," and he has never really understood the housecleaning, the raising of artistic standards, effected by Eliot and Pound. Moreover, it is true that when Max Eastman tries to talk about the emotions directly, he is likely to become rhetorical and turbid. Yet there *is* a lyric poet in Max Eastman, a personal voice, an original imagery, a temperament volatile and fugitive, glistening in de-

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lightful sun or vibrating from some moment of feeling, that is particularly felicitous in those poems that get their images from birds or water—from the tranquil pools of the forest, from the shots of silver spray, from the drops on the window pane casting a silver shadow, from the ferns, from the wet-petaled lilies, from the delicate-leaved bamboo, from the kingbird with quivering tiny wings, from the slender wild egret, from the sudden realization of the beauty of a woman, when the mind flickers electrically with perceptions.

As for his writings on the politics of the Left, one who has recently worked in this field and who has been through the whole sequence of Max Eastman's books inspired by the Russian Revolution will testify that he has found them the most valuable commentary provided by any writer in English on this subject. Whoever wants to understand the real (as distinguished from the artificial) exchange during the period after the War between Soviet Russia and the United States will have to read Max Eastman as well as John Reed: "Since Lenin Died," "Leon Trotsky," "Marx and Lenin, and the Science of Revolution" (now incorporated for the most part in "Marxism: Is It Science?"), "Venture," "Artists in Uniform," and the two newest books which I have mentioned.

John Reed and Max Eastman both observed the Russian Revolution at first hand. John Reed, American adventurer and democratic idealist, gave Lenin to America as an American, and died for what he believed to be the purposes of the Revolution. Max Eastman, with his cooler spirit and his better intellectual equipment, carefully studied its texts, analyzed its fundamental ideas, watched its politics, assessed its personalities; and he lived to see its betrayal and burial. Through all this, he remained as American as Reed. Mark Twain, the friend of his parents, had had his influence on Eastman's youth in Elmira: his manner as a public speaker is in the tradition of Mark Twain's dead-pan drollery and the casual drawl that disguises perfect timing. With a considerable cosmopolitan culture, Max Eastman brought to Moscow the Yankee skepticism and the humane common sense of Mark Twain's "Innocents Abroad." And no power on earth has prevailed upon him to succumb to the Marxist jargon which has concealed so much confusion, so much intellectual insincerity and so much downright deliberate fraud. When Max Eastman has got the Marxist ideas into English, the historical mythology of Marxism is seen to have disappeared: nothing remains but what is intelligible and applicable amid the realities of the American world.

Max Eastman's great contribution to the study of this subject in English has been to go to the mat with the fundamental conceptions of Marxism. It has tended to be true that the professional philosophers have left Marxism disdainfully alone, while the political adherents of the Marxist sects have failed to examine the Marxist philosophy. Max Eastman, a trained philosopher, showed the inadequacy of the Marxist system, which Marx, in his preoccupation with politics, had never found the time to work out; and he showed the theological delusions, carried over from the old religion by way of German idealistic philosophy, which were concealed by the scientific pretensions of Marx. For the pragmatical American mind, the ideas and literature of Marxism are peculiarly difficult to grapple with; and the American, when converted, tends to accept them as he does Methodism or Christian Science, as a simple divine revelation. The real and great intellectual genius of the work of Marx and Engels has made it possible for American intellectuals to whoop it up for the Marxist religion, under the impression that they were applying to the contemporary world a relentless intellectual analysis; and, strong in the assurance of standing right with the irresistible forces of History, the Marxist substitute for the old-fashioned Providence, they have felt that History would see them through without further intellectual effort on their part, and swallowed all the absurd policies and the expedient lies that the Stalinist agents fed them just as the obedient Catholic swallows the precepts of the priest.

Max Eastman has differed from these thinkers turned gapers in being an intellectual who really works at it. The thing that strikes one today in reviewing the work of the last twenty years by this radical who is supposed to have wilted is not the softness of his mind but its toughness. He went to study in the Soviet Union the implications and the possibilities of the socialist doctrine he had been preaching, and he proceeded to formulate his conclusions in a series of writings on which he continued to labor when the fashion had quite turned against radicalism, which he had in some instances to publish at his own expense, and which received almost no attention. One cannot see that movements and fashions have affected in any way—except to make him at times a little peevish—Max's record of what he thought the truth. The child of a mother and father both ordained Congregational ministers, with a long ancestry of parsons behind him, he has been upheld perhaps by a vocation neither political nor artistic, a conviction that there is an indispensable part to be played in human society by persons who make it their business to keep clear of the standards of the world and to stick by certain instincts of thinking and feeling whose value is not measured by their wages, and which it is always to the immediate interest of some group to mutilate, imprison or suppress. I know that I have produced in the above sentences a strange blend of the intellectual and the spiritual callings, as they are commonly understood, but it is only in some such special terms that it is possible to describe the role of Max Eastman.

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This role has its weaknesses, of course; and in these weaknesses are to be located perhaps the ultimate reasons for Max Eastman's eclipse. There is probably something basic in common between the objections felt against him, respectively, by the politicos and by the poets. Both have felt that he was criticizing them severely, and even on occasion ill naturedly, without sharing the rigors of their tasks. After all, Max Eastman was a poet who had not accepted the last discipline of his craft; a revolutionist who had stepped out of the battle to explain that the outcome was uncertain; a philosopher who held no chair; a journalist who had allowed his magazine to be captured by an opposition that parodied it in the interests of everything which Max Eastman most desired to fight. Above all, he was continually going on about something which he called "science"—though he himself was no species of scientist and had had, so far as one could discover, no scientific training at all—and with which he was always laying about him at partisans, philosophers and poets alike. I do not know how it happened that Max Eastman became so particularly hipped about science: he has erected it into a totem, about which it is as if he has talked too much because he has not known what clan he belonged to. So, also, the continual emphasis on what he calls "living" may have compensated his failure to cultivate intensively the several departments in which he has worked. Certainly Max has written with eloquence, as a non-scientific essayist can—for example, in the essay on "What Science Is" in his "Marxism: Is It Science?"—about the aims and the spirit of the scientist; and he has conveyed his conviction that "living," in a world where abstraction and specialization have been resulting in wholesale destruction, has an importance and rights of its own. But it is true that one has sometimes felt that these words were being waved in one's face at moments when Max himself might well have been more scientific about, as well as more alive to, certain things that were happening in the world about him.

This said, and it has already been said often, we must recognize that Max Eastman, after all, has justified his anomalous role of preacher-teacher-critic-poet. He has justified it in a way quite distinct from the way in which he first attracted attention—that is, as a public figure; he presents himself to his contemporaries today *as primarily a writer to be read*. The public side of him has since his absence abroad become somewhat dissociated from the rest—by a process probably not very congenial to him—in his activities as a popularizer and lecturer. This is the Eastman of "The Enjoyment of Laughter" and of the "Anthology for the Enjoyment of Poetry"—entertaining and readable books appropriate for bringing in a little money.

But on the other hand, his serious writing has become a good deal more interesting. One remembers his Liberator articles as having seemed a little diffuse and lacking in bony structure. But the prose of these recent books has a clarity and terseness of form, an intellectual edge, which would be hard to match elsewhere today in the American literature of ideas. This prose is not primarily an instrument for polemics but the medium for a point of view. The writings of Max Eastman make a commentary, imaginative, witty, sharp, uncompromising in its adherence to the line of its own conscience, not unlike that of André Gide; and the generation which has overrated Gide has underrated Max Eastman. His novel "Venture," for example, which passed almost unnoticed in 1927, before the torrent of strike novels had started, is an idea-novel of the type of Gide's, which deals with the problems of industry in a most unconventional way. The Platonic-Nietzschean capitalist who talks his young disciple into Bolshevism by expounding his ideals of a superior caste without perceiving that a superior caste may pursue anti-capitalist aims is one of the most brilliant things in Max Eastman; and the book is full of his characteristic aphorisms, acute and beautifully put, on the various phases of human experience.

This approach to modern life has its special limitations, and here we probably find another reason for the recent neglect of Max Eastman. As this novel is quite non-naturalistic, so his criticism of the Soviet Union and of the general situation in the contemporary world does not supply any adequate picture of social and economic conditions. It is strange that this student of Marxism should never have learned from Marx what is certainly most valid in his system: the class analysis of historical happenings. Max Eastman, as Philip Rahv has pointed out, tends to talk as if the fallacies of Marxism by themselves had wrecked the Leninist revolution, and is not interested in finding out how the development of social forces influenced the application of ideas. His social criticism is thus, it is true, mainly in terms of morality, philosophy and psychological motivation; but it has proved a most salutary element at a time when people were trusting blindly to arrangements of statistical figures to demonstrate the rights and wrongs of History without being able to smell the corpses in the Lubyanka or to take stock of what was healthy at home. Max Eastman has still, without our quite realizing it, as he was at the time of the last war, been the log which floats in the swimming-pool and prevents the pool from cracking in winter by itself taking the pressure of the ice.

He is also the unpopular foreigner who opens the window on the Russian train; the indiscreet guest who saves the banquet by making fun of the guest of honor; the rude and ill regarded professor whose courses the bright students all find out that they have to take. And these courses are now available in their definitive and polished form in "Stalin's Russia" and "Marxism: Is It Science?"

EDMUND WILSON

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I Thought of Lincoln

THERE will be many political dinners this year, as always, to celebrate Lincoln's greatness. Wendell Willkie is scheduled to speak at one, Thomas Dewey will contribute his Lincolnism to another, and Clare Boothe hers to a third. The orators will orate, the well fed and sleekly dressed thousands will applaud. There is nothing new in this. Yet this year as never before, in a national crisis deeper than any since the Civil War, we must reassert that Lincoln is not the monopoly of a party with whom today he has nothing in common.

He belongs, as leader, to the whole American people. And he is today the most complete and satisfying symbol of leadership we have. Leadership has two facets. At any moment a people needs not only a leader for the present but a leader for the past as well. And the man in the past to whom a people turns is just as important a fact about it as the man to whom it turns in the present. There has been a vast amount of guff written about Lincoln, and he has grown to the proportions of a legend. Yet, legend or not, the fact is that with every year Lincoln has been emerging more clearly as our great historical leader.

There are reasons for that, reasons which reach down to our sense of equality and our will to live. For Lincoln was a democrat, a man out of the people who never tore the roots that bound him to them. And he was a humanist, who felt deeply about inequality and inhumanity wherever he saw it. And he was a nationalist in whose mind the survival of the united nation came first. And he was a strong President who, when the time came for decisive action, knew how to act decisively. We tend to forget today that Lincoln's decision to risk a destructive war was a hard decision to make, and by no means as inevitable then as it seems to us now with the hindsight of history. All these qualities are the qualities that make great leadership in a crisis democracy. Whether he knows it or not, Mr. Roosevelt is being measured in our minds to that fit, as every leader will be measured as long as Americans have the task of making out of their democracy a strong state and out of their strength a living democracy.

There were many things wrong about Lincoln and the American democracy of his day. There were draft riots because the burden of service fell on those who could not buy their way out. There was bribery, inefficiency, appeasement. There were breadlines and banquets, profiteering and cowardice and criminal complacency. There were partisans to attack Lincoln from the political Left and Right, men who called him a baboon, accused him of selling out. But through it all, for all his veerings and indecisions, he clung tenaciously to his single-purposed course.

Given what the Civil War means to us, there are things also in our America of today for which we should apologize to those who died under Lincoln's leadership. I heard from a refugee just arrived from Marseilles of the conditions in the prison camps for German and Spanish refugees in France; and then I looked at the obstacles our State Department is placing in the path of their coming to our country, and I thought of Lincoln. I read Leigh White's account of the butchery of innocent Jews in the slaughterhouses of Bucharest, and then I read the speeches of our appeasers, and I thought of Lincoln. I thought of Ford's fight now against his workers, and of the preparations being made by Bethlehem Steel to fight labor, and I thought of Lincoln. I read of the Jim Crowism still practised in the American army, and of the fifteen Negro sailors dishonorably discharged from the navy because they had protested against discrimination, and I thought of Lincoln. I had a letter from a brilliant Negro professor who wrote that the vast body of his people saw the need for destroying Nazism: "How grimly ironic therefore that we should have to beg for our chance to help"; and I thought of Lincoln.

It is easy to idealize Lincoln and to read into him your own views and beliefs until they become his as well. But it is even easier to deflate than to idealize, to set him down as just a shoddy horse-trading politician. He was not that. If ever there was a man in our history who had the difficult stuff of heroism, this was the man. He was no absolutist and no program-builder. But neither was there any cant in him, as we know when we read his ironic letter to the delegation of ministers protesting as Christians against the war. He did a hard job well, with dignity, firmness and—in the midst of desperate measures—with compassion. Always he had the distinguishing mark of greatness, the ability in any problem to get at the jugular. He saw when he came to office that the crux of adequate presidential power in an emergency lay in the President's role as co commander-in-chief. And, although a hard-bitten realist, he could know the meaning and the value of a dream.

He was no great leftist. Yet the American progressives have made a mistake not to claim him as one of them. Why have they, with a few exceptions, steered shy of him? Has it been some curious snobbishness—the knowledge that Lincoln is in the very stream of the American tradition, and the feeling that the Left needs something more esoteric and marginal before it recognizes the stuff of heroism? If so, they have been cruelly wrong. For whether on a national or a trans-national plane, Lincoln, as the American common man raised to a heroic pitch, has in him the power to give meaning to the past and shape to the future. MAX LERNER

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Washington Notes

F.D.R. Outflanks 'Em

ADVOCATES of aid to England were disturbed by Mr. Roosevelt's willingness, at an evening White House conference with congressional leaders, to accept amendments to the lease-lend bill. As nearly as can be discovered, such apprehensions are needless. Mr. Roosevelt has not budged as much as the tolerance permitted in an airplane-engine-cylinder boring, or one one-thousandth of an inch.

The chief thing that worried the friends of England was Mr. Roosevelt's acceptance of a prohibition against using United States naval vessels on convoy duty across the Atlantic. It is generally feared here that Germany's submarine and ocean-bomber attacks will soon be intensified. The keeping open of the North Atlantic sea lane is a critical part of England's resistance.

But experts question whether, from a purely technical point of view, our navy could be particularly helpful. They think that Mr. Roosevelt, the sailor President, may have been influenced by naval facts rather than a wish to appease, let us say, Representative Tinkham. Britain would like to have additional American destroyers, as her representatives have stated, but she does not want the navy, as such, at least in the present emergency.

Experts say that Germany's all-out attack on Atlantic shipping, when it comes, will almost certainly be a fearsomely coördinated affair of air and sea power. Before the American navy could undertake to guard England-bound convoys, there would need to be (a) complete, well established unity of command between our commanders and the British Admiralty, (b) similar coördination between our commanders and the British-fleet air arm and (c) lengthy practice maneuvers at sea, by which time Germany's expected spring attack will have come.

Thus, the experts say, Mr. Roosevelt has yielded nothing in agreeing to a prohibition against convoys. But, they add, watch the administration's stiff stand against such straight-out lend bills as Senator Taft's. The chief substantial difference between the lease-lend bill and Mr. Taft's proposal for a two-billion-dollar gift to England is that the former bill specifically permits the President to dispose of existing military and naval equipment. The convoy situation also explains the administration's obvious anxiety to push the lease-lend bill to enactment. If Hitler is to be stopped, England must have more American destroyers, and have them well before the German attack arrives in April or May.

The attempt of Mr. Knudsen and the big-business men associated with him in the OPM to make peace with the New Dealers—previously commented on in these Notes—is to be carried farther. Union leaders are being selected to serve with each of the subgroups composing the OPM's production division; just as Mr. Knudsen and Mr. Hillman are co-directors of the whole organization, so a dollar-a-year business man and a union leader will boss single industries and groups of industries. It will be seen that this offers a pale approximation of the industrial-councils program urged by Philip Murray of the CIO. Conceivably it may bring real gains for labor. For the moment, however, it is important primarily in showing that the OPM's big-business group doesn't mind making inexpensive compromises.

Another bow to public opinion—represented concretely by the administration New Dealers and Mr. Hillman's labor division—is the OPM's new "farming-out" division, which is quite real and even impressive. Last summer, when the country's largest corporations were hogging NDAC-approved contracts, "farming-out" was ridiculed as pipe-dream stuff. The mere notion that big corporations should hand on part of their work, and profits, to smaller companies simply showed that you didn't understand, my dear fellow, the industrial process.

Mr. Knudsen has now set up a group whose only duty is to insist that orders be sublet, and has placed at its head Robert L. Mehornay, Kansas City furniture man, who has a remarkable record as an executive and negotiator. Like many of the defense organization, he is a hero of the last war. He was mentioned in dispatches by General Pershing and holds the Purple Heart medal. As advisers he has the fabulous Trecker brothers, Milwaukee machine-tool builders. In their own business, the Treckers farm out everything—according to the legend here—except the feeding of the office cat.

Because things at the OPM are sometimes not what they seem, it should be mentioned that the new "farming-out" division gives signs of also being a maneuver to escape the enveloping grasp of Secretary of Commerce Jesse Jones. It will be recalled that, a short time ago, Mr. Jones offered to finance, through the RFC, small companies wishing to assume contracts, or subcontracts, under the defense program. Mr. Jones's announcement was made immediately after Mr. Knudsen's assistant, Donald M. Nelson, had arranged for small-company financing through the private-bank members of the Federal Reserve System. It was generally thought that Mr. Jones was attempting to freeze out Mr. Nelson and the private bankers.

The new "farming-out" division, according to present plans, is to employ a hundred industrial engineers to search out small companies for defense work. Once they have found a company, they are under instructions to inform the nearest Federal Reserve bank, and to use its good offices in obtaining credits. In short, the "farming-out" division is Mr. Nelson's earlier scheme restored to life. One of its effects, at any rate, will be to reduce the RFC's share of defense financing to a minimum.

Although Marriner S. Eccles, head of the Federal Reserve System and one of the most eminent of the New Dealers, is supporting Mr. Nelson's program, there is a great deal to be said on Mr. Jones's side. Why shouldn't the voters, through the agency of the RFC, have control over the defense factories built with their own money? There is no control quite like that which a mortgage-holder can exercise. Aren't there other ways to mobilize private savings—Mr. Eccles' supposed aim—than by begging the private banks of the Reserve System to board the defense gravy train?

Washington T. R. B.

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At Two Theatres

The Cream in the Well, by Lynn Riggs. Booth Theatre, January 20, 1941.
Lady in the Dark, by Moss Hart; lyrics by Ira Gershwin; music by Kurt Weill. Alvin Theatre, January 23, 1941.

THERE ARE a few speeches in Mr. Lynn Riggs's new play that essay almost the high-flown, not unmindful of certain passages and efforts in Irish drama. They have an air of self-conscious imagery and rhythm, and serve to lessen the impression and impact of the scene they strive to ornament. Apart from these moments, the writing of "Cream in the Well" is far above the standard we are used to on Broadway. The lines speak themselves, as it were. Or, if you like, they are highly speakable and ingeniously natural. They have an idiomatic basic property of language about them; and have a flavor and easy emphasis that our theatre writing is sadly in need of.

Except for those self-conscious passages, this dialogue of Mr. Riggs could be called literary only through its employment of living speech—however skillfully and imaginatively intensified that may be—as contrasted with the dead and worn-flat speech of most of the plays that are produced. The majority of Mr. Riggs's lines could not be accused of being literary, as the term is usually applied to plays and the theatre: literary, that is, in the sense of some obvious and elaborate overlay of so-called style on matter where it is out of place and therefore non-expressive.

The story is laid in the Indian Territory, nearly forty years ago, the farm home of the Sawters on Big Lake, near Verdigris Switch. Every one of the seven characters is well drawn and is articulate. The performances are good, especially those of Miss Mary Morris as the mother, Mr. Myron McCormick as the drunkard, Mr. Harry Bratsburg as the comic small-town lawyer, Mr. Leif Ericson as the son, and Miss Martha Sleeper as the leading character, Julie, his sister. Miss Bina Campbell, as the plain young sister, showed herself a young actress who may truly be called a find for Broadway, a fresh and true talent.

Except for those two roles less intense and closer to plainness and comedy, the problem set the actors was never quite to be solved because of the blurred line of the play itself. In the first part especially there was a disconcerting lack of definition. The strongest motif in the story is that of the daughter Julie, who is impelled by forces within her to destroy everyone she is able to destroy. She has driven her brother from home when the farm most needed him; she drives a neighborhood wife to drowning herself in the lake; marries the husband and turns him into a debauched drunkard. Why Julie does all this and is so hounded with destroying impulses, we seem at moments to suspect perhaps, only to lose again the thread of motivation. Meanwhile the mother seems to understand the trouble, but never makes it plain to us. Only in the final moments of the play, when the son returns, do we get a statement of the incest motif; and then it is said with a downright boldness that amazes us, but it had to be that or nothing very likely. There was for an instant a stir of tragic matter that made you think of a vast theatre indeed and of the old argument that of all crimes incest has the greatest possibilities for tragedy, since it arouses the greatest play of violent passions.

In the theatre we never know what has been done to the original script of a play in the course of its production. However that may be in this case, we find ourselves watching Mr. Riggs's play at the Booth, and are astonished finally that the exposition should have proved so blurred, and that we were not told right off what was poisoning the soul of Julie, who might then have been a more tangible and richer piece of character and motif. I thought of Strindberg's play with the heroine of the same name, and what a mordant and terrific line it has. All this is regrettable, in view of the amount of sincere and high-minded effort that went into every phase of this occasion at the Booth.

Mr. Riggs takes his title from the remark of one of the characters about a well that regardless of the temperature and the freshness of the cream let down into it, turned all sour. As a title it seems to me like some of the Abbey Theatre's Celtic titles, arbitrary and not worthy of the play.

Mr. Jo Mielziner's setting for the big living-room was unusually good. I doubt whether his other setting, the son's vacant bedroom, so austere and stripped, was dramatic to the naturalistic style of dialogue and emotional exchanges of the scene; in itself it was superb, the design and the tone.

The play in which Miss Gertrude Lawrence appears from very near the rise of the curtain to something after eleven o'clock, with flips of absence from the stage now and then for the sake of lightning changes in costume and make-up, was written by Mr. Moss Hart as a kind of psychoanalytical drama, itching for tragedy perhaps, combined with musical, moody, variegated and lavish extravaganza. Miss Lawrence has an opportunity to do every kind of stage execution she has ever done in her vastly varied career. She carries everything off with a versatility almost uncanny, and an unflagging energy special to herself. Her performance needs cutting for repetition and to be held down at times for a stricter approach and method, and for a greater choiceness. In one scene certainly she is quite wonderful in all she does and all she projects, that of the circus, this time a glowing hallucination, it seems.

The lavish mounting of the whole production also reaches its top in the circus scene, which is deliriously delightful, and so on. Mr. Danny Kaye amounts to a rival star very nearly in the numerous parts that fall to him, in dreams and out of dreams.

The play itself is somewhat pretentious. The psychoanalysis theme has by now got to the point in the theatre where it must either be significant, or else clever, or else novel and fresh. "Lady in the Dark" achieves very little in any of these directions. Mr. Kurt Weill's music is very successful, especially in the tones, rich and beautiful, that he can invite from an orchestra.

STARK YOUNG

Journeys End in Lovers' Meetings

"My compass-heart has never swung astray,"
He said, "I have lived all time because it led this way—"
"My whole life," she said, "has seeped away."

"In the darkness or in the very bright
Violence of sun," he said, "in the full daylight
I have waited—" "And I," she said, "come dead to your arms tonight!"

VALENTINE ACKLAND

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Handsome Is . . .

SINCE "HIGH SIERRA" seems to meet with some difference of critical opinion, I must caution you that all expressions of praise here are purely coincidental and not to be confused with any living persons. It has faults; but it is fine and exciting and it is a moving picture. It is about a gangster—which, far from putting it in any easy category, is one of the things that make it go so well. The inevitable outcome of the profession of shooting your way places is getting shot yourself, and in this there is an almost perfect nemesis pattern whose state of preservation in movie stories is probably the only gift to pictures conferred by the Decency Code. So when Humphrey Bogart is sprung from a life sentence here in order to take charge of a big underworld project, you need not fear the ending will find him with a radio contract, a cottage and kids. To keep up with himself as an outlaw from the whole world though living in it, he must go faster and faster toward an end that is precise and inescapable and dramatically right.

Mr. Bogart is a very cool number at his job, but you will not need a recounting of the plot. It is enough that this is one of the rare times a good action story has had naturally within it some of the elements of the fates and the furies which are the material of tragedy, in which death can be neither a bluebird nor a mere pool of blood. Of course the pantywaist moralites will be saying that we are glorifying the gangster again, which will of course be as true a statement of this instance as it would be of whole lashings of the world's art, with its romantic brigands, highwaymen, pirates, dictators, Napoleons, vigilantes, cops and robbers generally. And as little to any purpose.

But no picture may live by its point or civic purpose alone, and this is a picture that lives on the screen. In the middle of it is Humphrey Bogart, whose conception and rock-bound maintenance of the hard-handed, graying and bitter ex-con is not only one of the finest projections of character in any story of men in action, but the whole vertebrate structure of this one. A good part of the telling time is given to his human side and—particularly in the case of the crippled girl he can help but not marry—is slugged a little too hard. But this is a logical part of his life, and it is his life we must be concerned with. He was not betrayed by the spare few he helped and trusted, and it is absurd to suppose that a man who makes his living with an unlicensed gun may not like dogs or need women.

In the end it is Bogart who makes it true anyway, for there is not one minute in this picture when the intensity of his presence is not felt, or when he is false or foolish. He is a man you are gradually allowed to hear tick and would not monkey with, a man you feel must be obeyed instinctively, and remembered. There are of course the others—good character actors, down to the dog and up to the rather difficult and well done part of Ida Lupino; writing and direction gauged to the stern demands of the true movie (John Huston, W. R. Burnett; Raoul Walsh); and a setting that is as much a tribute to the original conception as to the eloquent, flexible camera set-ups of Tony Gaudio, with their contained action and high Sierras too.

Except for the tire-patch quality of the crippled-girl theme, and a wet three minutes of putting hearts through the wringer at the end, this is what I should call a film worth exposing negative for, and comes almost as a valedictory, in both dialogue interpolations and its position in a cycle. As I say, it's a divided-response business and perhaps will take more imagination, awe and pity than you are willing to spare. But like it or not, I'll be damned if you leave before the end or go to sleep; and in the way of movies, that's what I'm talking about.

Word has got around that "Tall, Dark and Handsome" is considerable of a lark, and maybe it is. The idea I got from reading about it is that it kids the killer legend, but this must have been two other pictures, because the only leg they pull on the actual screen here is their own.

It is made as comedy, so much is true. On one side of a serious gang war there is a mob leader whose erasure of those who disagree with him has made him the terror of the underworld, or so it seems until he falls in love. In love, he schemes to present himself to the pigeon of his choice as a banker and the doting father of children, but ixnay see, because in walks the opposition mob-leader, who is a man not out for laughs, and the truth is out before the girl's own eyes and how could you I hate you oh.

But the bad man being Cesar Romero she can't quite help feeling something ("If only he wasn't a, a *killer!*"). Well, he gets her a job singing in a spot of his and she is of course sensational. But she can't still get over that *killer*. So how is everything squared? Why it comes out by chance that he is the kindest man in the world and has never killed anybody in his life; his supposed victims are kept in a comfortable private jail in the basement while he provides for their bereaved families—he wouldn't hurt a fly. This is the big twist of the picture and not a bad idea, but even if you hadn't seen the earnest straight way they play it you would guess that their eye was not so much on comedy as on the Hays office.

There is comedy in the picture, all right: some bright lines and Milton Berle, who was certainly responsible for some of them, and a nice collection of humorous and tender-hearted gorillas, and also a youngster who is reputed to make the Dead End kids look like Freddie Bartholomew—though here again is an example of debasement through typing, for the little man works so hard along the line laid out for him that he is just Peck's Bad Boy with a paint job. This is pretty much fringe, however. Action is one of the central things, and there is a little of it at the end, when the opposition mob leader who is *not* kind to his mother tries to move in on the girl and erase practically the whole blackboard, but goes to a nasty jail instead.

The other central thing is romance, and gets most of the play. How many old-hat tricks can you remember offhand in the story of the rough diamond and his lovely but timid lovey? All here, all played for straight belief. They mean it, or they try to mean it, and it is just hollow enough and ham enough to be essentially distasteful. Not just bad, you understand—for in writing and direction, casting and incidental invention, it is a thin cut above the awful average—but distasteful, like piety with a stale breath. I know critics are tried and tired men, but there needs to be some law that the fine, complete English word "hilarious" should be limited, like the carrying of a pistol, to those who can prove they both need and can use it.

OTIS FERGUSON

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Two Exhibitions

I. French Art Before the Dawn

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, from February 6 to March 26, will show the most important collection of "The Painting of France Since the French Revolution" which this country has ever seen. As the period covered is the one in which painting attained its fullest development and also the qualities that are most significant of France's genius, we can understand why the French government selected such works for a good-will gesture toward the Americas.

This exhibition was assembled and sent out of France more than a year ago, which of course means that the government of the time had no premonition of the present disastrous circumstances. First shown at Buenos Aires, then in Montevideo, in Chile and Rio de Janeiro, the exhibition comes to New York after a highly successful visit to San Francisco. Since the rules of the Metropolitan exclude from the walls of the museum works belonging to dealers, a number of pictures previously in the exhibition have had to be replaced by works from our own resources. If that causes the loss for the public of masterpieces by Ingres, Corot and Delacroix which would have meant much to us, and if we regret, also, the omission of the twentieth century, the showing of some forty works borrowed from American collections is pretty full compensation.

There are pictures from the Louvre, like the "Pius VII" by David; those by pupils of the great revolutionary, Gros, with one of his most extraordinary compositions, and Ingres—his long career stretching from a superb portrait of his youth to the very late "Turkish Women at the Bath." Géricault, with a study for his unique masterpiece, "The Raft of the Medusa," Corot, Daumier, Courbet, Millet and Théodore Rousseau appear with representative pictures; and among the Delacroix paintings sent by France, the great canvases from the museums of Bordeaux and Montpellier show the wealth of the provincial capitals. A precious series of drawings supplements the larger works, while the subsequent development of the school is magnificently shown in the art of the later nineteenth century.

The question everyone will be asking is what can be expected as a continuation of this line, or whether it is to continue at all. Before the present conflict, certain men of the highest standing in France had maintained that painting had run its course, and that the era we were entering would see its decadence and then its disappearance, for a long time at least.

But defeatism, as regards French art or painting in general, seems to me as ill founded as it is repellent. The reason appears when we consider, for example, the work of Cézanne, in this exhibition, and grasp anew the significance of a phrase of his, the unquestionable one in which he said: "I remain the primitive of the way I have discovered."

"The primitive!" That word directs us to the Greece of the sixth century, and to the Italy of the time of Giotto. The Asiatic hordes were to fall upon Greece at the time just following that of the Greek primitives, and catastrophic wars were to rend Italy after the time of Giotto. But in the case of both those countries of the earlier time, the strength of the people, which had but recently made new beginnings, arose in triumph over the brutality of outer circumstance: on the one hand, we see the splendor that culminated in Phidias, on the other, that which rose to the height of Michelangelo.

It is not wishful thinking to see a parallel in the present case of France. The evidence is before us. This art has not decayed since the time of its most recent primitive. As the long history of the country shows us in one example after another, an age of beginnings is followed by an age of development. In our time, the men who have followed that "way" which Cézanne discovered already prove that the land is running true to its form. The men of today attest the survival of painting, its enrichment after the severe, almost ascetic vigil of Cézanne.

Art has been described often enough as history written in stone. It is a time for us to look to its prescience of the future, rather than to its recording of the past. As the upheavals of the great modern movement forecast, before 1914, the conflicts which were to shake the world, so the superb courage and achievement of the later artists offer the best affirmation that their country has, even now, the strength to meet its problem, as they have met theirs. The hour is still dark, but Chantecler cries out to us that the sun will rise again.

WALTER PACH

II. Indians at the Museum of Modern Art

THE EXHIBITION of Indian Art at the Museum of Modern Art will upset a world of preconceptions. More than that, it tells a significant story of both the Indian and the white man.

The show was arranged by the United States Indian Arts and Crafts Board, which interlocks closely with the once notorious Indian Bureau. Government resources made possible the gathering of a magnificent selection; the cachet of the Museum prepares the public mind. These advantages were denied the excellent, privately maintained Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts in 1931, when the government was at best lukewarm, and the public was chary of becoming enthusiastic over material which had not yet, like African art, been approved by Paris.

The government's part in this tells of a complete overturn in the white man's thinking. For a century or more the Indian Bureau joined with missionaries in opposing every expression of the Indians' creative gifts. The main reason was that when an Indian worked in his own mode he strengthened pride of race, refreshed his contact with his people's history, recalled the riches of his own culture. As long as the policy was to destroy every trace of Indianism and make the Indians into the closest possible imitations of white men, the practice of their arts was detrimental. It was the far-reaching change to a policy of helping the Indian to become competent *as an Indian* in the modern world, building progress on the necessary foundation of self-respect and pride of origin, that has made the present show possible.

The Arts and Crafts Board has worked out a presentation which has important things to say to any thoughtful observer. To get the full force of the collection, begin as the attendants tell you to, at the top floor, and work down. It will take you a little while to discount the remarkable

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showmanship with which the individual objects are exhibited, but you will soon see that, with a few exceptions, the showmanship is enlightening rather than deceptive. You will have one other difficulty on the top floor. The collection is too inclusive, diluted with specimens of the work of ancient, savage people more "interesting" (particularly to an archeologist) than convincing.

On this floor, if you take it slowly, you will see what is clear to anyone looking at collections of the Egyptian neolithic period. One looks at that Old World material conscious, not only of the tradition before the fine Egyptian products, but also of the tradition after. One sees the beauty of the things themselves, knowing the wonders to follow. Here is a similar situation: zones of high culture overrun from time to time by the surrounding savage tribes who carried on the civilization in their turn, a beginning which had long ceased to be primitive (look at the enlargement of the Adena figurine, the fine effigies, the Awatobi murals), and which was moving toward greater things when the white man stepped in and stopped it dead.

Not quite dead. The second floor, "The Living Tradition," shows what the Indians made after the white man had begun to press hard upon them, after the confinement of the reservations bound their spirits, on into this century when the people were dying, disease and hunger ravaged them, and there seemed to be no hope. The general level stays high, and certain objects meet the real test, that they would be accepted as beautiful wherever one found them, and that one would be more interested in looking at them than in asking where they come from. A San Ildefonso red, black and cream jar, another from Acoma in black and white, a Haida slate figure of a woman, stick in my mind.

The important thing is not that all this work survives and still continues, but how much it has changed. European tools and materials offered new opportunities, which have been used to the full. The "Living Tradition" makes this very clear. Beside painted buffalo robes are Navajo blankets of wool, carving with metal tools, beads, silver. Seminole appliqué and the striking "ribbon-work" depend upon manufactured materials entirely, yet they remain utterly Indian. The latest examples of ribbon work have been sewn on a machine.

It is this change that demonstrates the strength of Indian art and its importance to us. On the ground floor are shown the possibilities of using Indian art in modern living. The paintings are murals on canvas, and excellent water colors. Navajo silversmiths have made cups such as no Indian ever made before, really beautiful, and still in the Indian tradition. The ornamentation which Cheyenne women lavished on their leggings is effectively applied to an evening wrap, the material Indian, the use Fifth Avenue. The presentation is weakest on this floor, rather cold, sometimes vague, as if the exhibitors themselves grew weary by the time they reached this point. None the less, much of what is shown speaks for itself.

The whole show is worth visiting for sheer pleasure. There is pleasure, too, in grasping its double statement: that Indian art is still vigorous, still evolving as its creators begin to merge into the modern world, and that we ourselves are beginning to wake up to what the Indians have to offer.

OLIVER LA FARGE

The Bandwagon

Residents from communities on Britain's southeast coast sought an explanation tonight for a peculiar and penetrating odor emanating from the direction of German-held France. – *UP dispatch from London in The New York Times.*

The war? It's increased business. Women are spending more time on their faces than ever. Sorrow gives such lines, you know, and women won't stand for that. – *From an interview with Elizabeth Arden, printed in The San Francisco News.*

Our country! May she always be in the right; but right or wrong, our country! is our historic sentiment.

Chesterton declares that this sentiment is like saying:

"Our mother, drunk or sober."

But Chesterton was a foreigner and had no finer feeling. – *From an editorial in The (Hearst) Boston Daily Record.*

I am not unmindful of "perfidious Albion's" role in the past, and I am not sure she would not turn against us now if we refused to go along with her. She still has her jumping-off islands along the seaboard. And yet I would give her everything short of actual entry into this war, that she might keep her empire. Why? Because she mothered and fostered the great Bible society, and because of the great missionaries she has sent out and protected. – *From a letter to The Christian Century.*

Arms and the Man

General Argentino, captured four days ago by a British motorboat crew after he had escaped from Bardia, ended a hunger strike yesterday with the cry:

"For all I care about this desert, you can have it! I myself am a poet." – *AP dispatch from Libya in The New York Post.*

Forewarned Is Forearmed

[Leon] Henderson finished amid a smattering of applause and then bolted for the door with Fleishel at his heels protesting that the [lumber] industry was "patriotic and non-profiteering," and desired to continue patriotic. – *Item in The Philadelphia Inquirer.*

Onward and Upward with the Arts

Now that knife blades of either silver or stainless steel are to be found in practically every house, the ban against eating salad with a knife is lifted. But eating salad with a spoon! Oh, dear, no! – *Emily Post in the Sunday supplement of The San Francisco Chronicle.*

Did He Repair Any Watches?

His [Willkie's] spirits were so buoyant on the flight from Lisbon, Portugal, that he couldn't keep his seat. He paced up and down in the plane and even helped the navigators chart their course. – *AP dispatch from London in The Boston Post.*

Cold-Comfort Department

His [Jan Valtin's] chief chance of safety would seem to lie in making himself as widely known as possible so that his sudden death would but serve to confirm the truth of his revelation. – *From Bertram D. Wolfe's review of Valtin's "Out of the Night," in The New Republic.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

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Correspondence

What Is Poetry?

SIR: In his recent criticism of my book, "Poetry and the Modern World" (The New Republic, January 6), Mr. Tate accuses me of judging literature politically and of really disliking literature, anyway. "His general test of the value of modern poets is social 'relevance' and social 'truths,' " says Mr. Tate, of myself. This is a complete distortion. In *explaining* works, I discussed their social and political backgrounds and implications, but in *evaluating* them I frequently stressed that "explanation of origins has no necessary connection with assessment of value." It is true that I use the term "relevance" in discussing how best the literary process can be explained, *but Mr. Tate claims that my theory of relevance is a theory of value, whereas it is nothing of the sort*—a point I emphasized again and again.

If only Marxists are good poets (and Mr. Tate says I believe that), anyone who doesn't hold a simple political faith is a bad poet. So he duly states that I am "exasperated" by "the multiplicity of belief and attitude of the poets," ignoring the statement, in my chapter on Hopkins, that a new excellence came into English poetry as a result of that multiplicity. Ignoring the fact that I claim Yeats as the greatest of the modern poets, he fathers on me crudities and absurdities. He quotes a sentence of mine: "It is Yeats's structural ability and his superb gift of phrase that enable him to transform private mutterings into great poetry." Then he goes on: "But according to Mr. Daiches' general theory, private mutterings cannot be great poetry; the mutterings must have relevance." Now this might well be called criminal misrepresentation. Nowhere do I say any such thing. What is faintly churning in Mr. Tate's pale mind is my statement that the *critic* must have a sense of relevance to understand the full implications of a work. Everything that I say of the critic in that chapter Mr. Tate consistently makes me claim as the *sine qua non* of the poet.

According to "my general theory" it is quite possible for private mutterings to be transformed into great poetry by style, by method of expression. Illumination can be created by style, the particular made universal by method of expression: "If poetry has a single function, it is to remind men of their humanity by increasing it; to present experiences which by their content bring recognition and by their form bring illumination. To touch as many significant truths as possible while nominally presenting a single subject, to name one letter of the alphabet in such a way that all the other letters will sing in joint and several implication—that is the function of technique in poetry." I wrote that in "Poetry and the Modern World." I also said: "Poetry is the expression of man's mental and emotional experiences in the most direct and memorable manner." Not once do I suggest that only poets who are politically right (that is, Left) can be great poets.

Mr. Tate also assumes that I put forward C. Day Lewis as a greater poet than Yeats or Eliot because he is politically further to the Left. His only evidence is that I give Day Lewis a whole chapter to himself. This chapter was given as a discussion of what the modern poet thinks and feels and why: no deduction was made from the poet's views to his value as poet.

Mr. Tate takes my conclusions concerning the *critic's* duty and pretends I claim them as the creative writer's prerequisite. "Mr. Daiches is puzzled by what he calls Yeats's 'fantastic philosophy,' which he cannot accept, because it is not 'relevant.' " Where do I say this? Relevance is not a criterion I use *anywhere* in discussing a poet's thought. Like many, I am "puzzled" by much of Yeats's thought. But I show in my analysis of "Bzyantium" how Yeats can write great poetry even if it is based on such thought. Mr. Tate ignores that discussion.

"There is even evidence in this book that Mr. Daiches still enjoys the advantages of a classical education," says Mr. Tate. This kind of argument is not only silly; it is cheap and it is offensive. Be my classical education what it may, I try to maintain my critical honesty and do not have to misrepresent a man before I can argue against him.

Chicago, Ill. DAVID DAICHES

SIR: Because Mr. Daiches has revived the controversial tradition of Milton and Salmasius, in which one's opponent is always a dog, I offer this commentary only as a footnote to my review.

Mr. Daiches does say, here and there in his book, all the fine things about poetry that he quotes in his letter. He says that Hopkins introduced a new richness into English poetry. Nowhere does he say that only a Marxist can be a poet. Mr. Daiches' feeling about all these things is, I am sure, perfectly correct, and the feeling testifies to his sensitivity.

But is the feeling justified in terms of his critical philosophy? That is the question at issue. His personal judgment and his taste lead him to admire things that he cannot "place" critically. His admiration of Yeats is all to the good, but I do not see that he meets the issue by merely repeating the dilemma that I questioned. He is still saying that "private mutterings" can be made into great poetry "by method of expression." This is the central issue of his book, and I do not think we meet it by abusing Salmasius.

While Mr. Daiches does *not* say that only a Marxist can be a poet, his critical doctrine logically compels him to a conclusion not too remote from that. Only the relevant poet—Marxist or whoever he is—is a poet. I do say that Mr. Daiches makes relevance the *sine qua non* of the poet no less than of the critic. If the critic is not going to look for relevance in the poets, why is it his own *sine qua non?* Mr. Daiches is merely quibbling. In short, his "appreciation" of poetry is rhetorical; when he thinks, he thinks in terms of "relevance." It is an interesting dilemma.

Princeton, N. J. ALLEN TATE

Excess Profits

SIR: In your editorial, "What Excess Profits Tax?" (January 6), you contend that laxity in the excess-profits tax defrauds the federal Treasury. Claiming that the calculation of earnings on the basis of their relation to invested capital permits tax avoidance, you cite the new law's allegedly insufficient incidence on "Tom Girdler's Republic Steel" and on the Bethlehem Steel Corporation.

It seems to me that actually the position of both these companies perfectly substantiates the propriety of relating excess profits to invested capital rather than to previous earnings, particularly in certain industries. For here is how the 60,000 shareholders who own the Republic Steel Corporation along with Mr. Girdler have fared during the past decade of severe capital-goods depression. This company, having in the ten-year period suffered an aggregate net deficit of $5,000,000 (before any charges whatever on its allegedly overcapitalized stock), the holders of the regular preferred stock have been without any

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dividends in six of those years, and the common stockholders have received no dividends whatever since August, 1930. Similarly, Bethlehem Steel has been unable to pay the holders of its five-percent preferred more than $1 per share a year since its issuance five years ago; its common stockholders have been without any dividends in five of the eight years since 1932, and have received a total of but $8 per share in the entire interval. Surely the accrual of some income for the 94,000 shareholders of Bethlehem and for the 60,000 of Republic during the present hiatus between the past heavy industries depression and the next readjustment period, is not creating any army of war millionaires or cheating the Treasury.

The Treasury experts have been aggressively advocating that excess profits be determined by relating earnings to invested capital instead of to previous income. You apparently want the earnings—after the 33.3-percent rise in the individual corporate tax, and irrespective of the relevance of individual profits to defense activities—to be taxed by whichever of the two methods takes the larger amount from each company. But surely that would not constitute the taxation of excess profits under any conceivable definition.

New York City A. WILFRED MAY

[Mr. May doesn't want any excess-profits tax, because it might prevent stockholders from catching up with the depression years. But who is making up depression losses suffered by the workers or by merchants and other middle-class people? Republic Steel made more money in 1940, after allowing for the excess-profits tax, than in any previous year in its history and actually did catch up on all its back preferred dividends before 1940 was over. In the three months following June 1, 1940, Bethlehem Steel picked up $833,000,000 of *new* business, mostly of a military nature. – THE EDITORS]

That Quotation from Mr. Churchill

SIR: The New Republic of January 20 carried a letter by B. D. Allinson vouching for the authenticity of a statement made, supposedly, by Winston Churchill on August 11, 1936, to the owner of The New York Enquirer to the effect that had America stayed out of the War, the Allies "would have made peace with Germany in the spring of 1917, thus saving over a million British, French, American and other lives, and preventing the subsequent rise of fascism and Nazism."

In "The World Crisis, 1916-1918," Vol. I, page 216, printed in 1927, Mr. Churchill wrote: "If the Allies had been left to face the collapse of Russia without being sustained by the intervention of the United States, it seems certain that France could not have survived the year, and the War would have ended in a peace by negotiation or, in other words, a German victory."

On page 237 of the same volume, he wrote: "What he [Wilson] did in April, 1917, could have been done in May, 1915. And if done then, what abridgment of the slaughter; what sparing of the agony; what ruin, what catastrophes would have been prevented; in how many homes would an empty chair be occupied today; how different would be the shattered world in which victors and vanquished alike are condemned to live!"

One page 477 of "The Aftermath, 1918-1928," written in 1929, Mr. Churchill stated: "We have seen by what strange fortune the struggling Allies gained in the nick of time a new giant in the West to replace the dying titan of the East."

These words directly contradict Mr. Allinson's interpretation of the quotation attributed to Mr. Churchill in 1936. Far from wishing that America had stayed out of the War, Mr. Churchill says that if we hadn't intervened, Germany would have won, that we came in just "in the nick of time," and that we should have come in two years earlier.

When Mr. Churchill's activities in 1936 are examined, it will be seen that, by no means desiring to alienate American opinion by words such as those attributed to him by Mr. Allinson, he was trying to awaken England to the magnitude of the Nazi threat, and wanted to better relations with America. For instance, The New York Times of April 24, 1936, reports: "Mr. Churchill's speech was the highlight of the debate on the budget in which he and others twitted the government for its non-payment of the war debt to the United States." On November 19, the same paper reports a speech made by Mr. Churchill to the United Associations of Great Britain and France in which he pays homage to this country.

This evidence of Mr. Churchill's views is easily available to all who are sincerely interested in investigating his true opinions.

Cambridge, Mass. E. L. POPPER

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Emma Garcia, New York City, tells us of the arrest in India of Rajni Patel, member of the Indian National Congress. Mr. Patel lectured in the United States in 1939 and advocated independence for India. On returning to India recently he was met at the pier by the police, Miss Garcia says, and taken to prison. Miss Garcia is puzzled as to why Britain, fighting for democracy, finds it necessary to imprison such believers in democracy as Mr. Nehru and Mr. Patel. She wonders why this isn't the time to use the great abilities of such leaders of democracy. Numerous other readers wonder the same thing and say they fail to find the answer in the speeches of Britain's Secretary of State for India, Colonel Amery.

Another question to which we haven't the answer is raised by a Middle Western correspondent, whose name cannot be used, who cites the case of a brilliant young research chemist drafted into the army and asks: is the government going to be wise enough to make use of the special training of such men? If not, he points out, the leaders of America are "letting their skimmers leak."

Do you recall the matter of the Pelley letters, sold by one David Mayne, a Dies Committee investigator about a year ago? Gardner Jackson writes from Washington to note that Mayne has pleaded guilty to forgery and to obtaining money under false pretenses. He is convinced that Mayne was an instrument of others and that those others were connected with the Dies Committee. If any reader wishes to ask whether Dies Committee methods can be trusted to uncover truth we can make a plain answer to that question.

Do you know what Bio-Psycho-Dynamics is? Bio-Psycho-Dynamics is *subsistential* in being, *existential* in quantitative creation and *super-subsistential* in qualitative appreciation. Man is a child of the cosmic Bio-Psycho-Dynamics. A correspondent from Allentown, Pennsylvania, told us this and we pass it on so you'll have the answer if anyone asks you what either man or Bio-Psycho-Dynamics is.

Anne Burrows, New York City, doubts the fitness of Attorney General Robert H. Jackson for a place on the Supreme Court. She refers us to an article by Herbert W. Briggs, "Neglected Aspects of the Destroyer Deal," in The American Journal of International Law for October, 1940. . . . Several readers, notably Carlton F. Wells, Ann Arbor, Michigan, write about The Saturday Evening Post and its "undisguised appeasement policy."

Did You See It in the Papers? "Roberta Lloyd, 60, employee of the Geauga WPA sewing project, who attracted attention last winter because she walked twenty miles daily from Bainbridge to her work here, died of asthma." You would have read the sentence in The Warren Tribune Chronicle, Warren, Ohio. "Some people won't work," remarks Elizabeth J. Hauser, who sent it to us.

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Books in Review

The Wandering Jew

"One must cheat no one, not even the world of its triumph." – "Aphorisms," by Franz Kafka.

A REVIEWER remarked recently that Kafka was in danger of becoming the idol of a clique; this would be a pity indeed, for there is no modern writer who stands so firmly and directly in the European tradition, none less romantic and eccentric. Had one to name the artist who comes nearest to bearing the same kind of relation to our age that Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe bore to theirs, Kafka is the first one would think of. It is our singular good fortune that he should have been turned into English[1] by our best translator, Edwin Muir, but a sad comment on our publishers that there is no complete, definitive and cheap edition. "The Great Wall of China," for example, which contains, in my opinion, Kafka's finest work and is certainly the best introduction to him, has yet to appear here.

In his three big novels Kafka employs the oldest of literary devices, that of The Quest, and perhaps the best way of approaching his work is to compare it with earlier examples of this genre.

In the fairy story the goal is the acquisition of a Sacred Object (the Water of Life, the Golden Fleece, etc.), which endows its possessor with magical powers. This object has usually fallen into the wrong hands; the giant, dragon or witch who uses its powers for evil ends. The Hero who wrests it from them is aided by benevolent *genii loci* without whose help he would fail like his predecessors. Though his power to charm and willingness to obey these white magicians are due, immediately, to his personality, both these and his success are predestined. He is the prophesied Hero, the lucky Third Son. The Necessary coöperates with him to restore the Sacred Object to its proper individual owner.

In the medieval legend of the Holy Grail, the situation has changed. The Sacred Object, the Hallows, still remains, but it has not been stolen by black magic, nor is it anyone's private property; it was once manifest to all alike, but their sin has made it disappear: it cannot be owned, it can only be worshiped; though it is supernatural, it bestows no magical powers; to be permitted to behold it is the only reward. In theory anyone who led a pure life could find it, but, in practice, to lead such a life is now impossible without the supernatural gift of Grace, and the Grail is only attained by the predestined knight, Sir Galahad.

After the Reformation the Sacred Object (the concrete material incarnation of the Absolute) vanishes, and the goal becomes personal salvation.[2] Christian and Faust are saved as individuals, *i. e.*, the salvation of the rest of mankind is uninvolved, but there is nothing predestined about their fate. They succeed not because they are perfect but because they never give up the struggle to achieve perfection. Between "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Faust," however, an entirely new note has been introduced, the Ironical. Christian may ignore the directions he is given, but they are never equivocal; the Way may be difficult but it is not deceptive. Doubt is a giant who must either destroy or be destroyed. But in "Faust" the Lord himself says:

> Of all the Spirits of Denial,
> Irks me the least the mischievous buffoon.
> Man's efforts lightly flag, and seek too low a level.
> Soon doth he pine for all-untrammeled sloth.
> Wherefore a mate I give him, nothing loth,
> Who spurs and shapes and must create though Devil.

Faust is saved because he is never content, and he is never content because the Mephistopheles will never let him rest: the Devil is the cause of losing his own wager.

In "Peer Gynt" the irony is pushed even further: producers who make Peer die at the end of the play miss the whole point, which is that Solveig's answer to his question *Where is the real Peer?*—"in my hope, in my faith, in my love"—is no more final than any of the previous answers; he will still have to meet the Button Moulder again. Not only are all the answers only provisional but the possibility of salvation itself is left in doubt.

The Ironical is equally apparent in the characters of Faust and Peer; by any ordinary moral standards they are a precious pair of scoundrels. Galahad and Christian were exceptional because morally better than the conventional average; Faust and Peer exceptional because they are morally worse. The Hero has become a Bohemian. Why then is everything made easy for them? Why are they especially favored of God and men? Because they are faithful to the motto "To thyself be true," because they regard the Arbitrary in themselves as the Necessary.

Perhaps the simplest way of defining the Kafka hero is to say that he is the mirror-image of Faust, the negator of the negator.

His goal is once more, as in the earlier Quests, clearly defined and universally recognized; everyone wants to work in the Oklahoma Nature Theatre, be on the right side of the Law, live near the Castle, but, whereas for all the others their only hope of success was to become exceptional in one way or another, for K (the hero of "The Castle") it is precisely the fact of his being exceptional, even though he cannot tell in what his exceptionality consists, that creates exceptional and perhaps fatal difficulties. Kafka says, in effect: "To be saved is to have Faith, and to have Faith means to recognize something as the Necessary. Whether or not the faith of an individual is misplaced does not matter; indeed, in an absolute sense, it always is. Far from Faust's and Peer Gynt's being exceptions, they are the type of the unreflective common man (if such a person exists any more). They are saved because they have the

[1] Amerika, by Franz Kafka. Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions. 317 pages. $2.50.
A Franz Kafka Miscellany. New York: Twice a Year Press. 99 pages. $2.
The Castle, by Franz Kafka. New edition with an introduction by Thomas Mann. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 363 pages. $2.50.

[2] Moby Dick is a unique exception. The motif of salvation is absent and the whale is a fusion of the Sacred Object with the Malevolent Guardian.

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primitive animal faith of the child, that does not ask where it is going, but enjoys the ride. To become exceptional—that is to say, to become reflective—is to discover that the Necessary itself, to the human vision, appears arbitrary. For Faust everything is easy because he does not recognize that what he obeys is arbitrary; for K the difficulties are endless because, since he can never again hide the arbitrary appearance of everything from himself, he is in constant danger of denying the Necessary he cannot understand, of losing his faith, and to lose Faith is to be damned."

For Faust, the Renaissance Man, the dialectic is external; his ethical problem is how to reconcile two incompatible esthetic relationships, his relation to himself and his relation to others; his temptation is to deny their incompatibility, which means to return to the esthetic pantheism of the fairy story. For K, the Modern Man, on the other hand, the division between the outer and inner has broken down; his ethical problem is how to separate what he must obey from what he must decide, how to avoid equally both presumption and delay; his temptation is to accept the incompatibility, not as an appearance caused by human sin and limitation, but as real and final, to become a dualist, either in an other-worldly religious way which relegates the Necessary to another life, or in an other-worldly political way which relegates the Necessary to another time, but in both cases accepts the Arbitrary as being the only reality here and now.

Kafka is thus equally upsetting to the liberal intellectual who thinks that there are no ethical problems, only esthetic ones, and to the revolutionary who admits an ethical problem but wants it simplified into a dualistic form.

Thus Mr. Klaus Mann in his introduction to "Amerika" speaks of Kafka's "religious-persecution mania," and the psychoanalysts go to town over his relationship with his father. Kafka understood this better than they when he wrote: "All these so-called diseases, pitiful as they look, are beliefs, the attempts of a human being in distress to cast his anchor in some mother soil." Psychotherapy will not get much further until it recognizes that the true significance of a neurosis is teleological, that the so-called traumatic experience is not an accident, but the opportunity for which the child has been patiently waiting—had it not occurred, it would have found another, equally trivial—in order to find a necessity and direction for its existence, in order that its life may become a serious matter. Of course it would be better if it could do without it, but unconsciously it knows that it is not, by itself, strong enough to learn to stand alone: a neurosis is a guardian angel; to become ill is to take vows. The questions with which Kafka dealt, the nature of his genius, have very little to do with his father; what the latter could do for him was to compel him to accept his vocation, to help him to resist the temptation to deny his vision by accepting a cosy conventional belief—to deny that the Necessary appears arbitrary.

Similarly, Professor Slochower is worried by what he calls Kafka's "solipsistic view," his inability to present "real situations." Why cannot Kafka see that the Castle is a magic castle, the Trial an example of class injustice, that Truth and Justice reside with Pepi? Kafka is not, however, a solipsist; the world in which he moves is always the world in which not only other people but also the mysterious Powers themselves operate. Nor is he a defeatist; he never relaxes his efforts to reach the Castle or clear himself or get a job; he is always willing to enter into relationships with others, however disturbing they may be. What really worries the politician is his faith; that when Klamm, the Judge, etc., behave in a way which appears to him immoral, he never says: "This is reality, this is the way the universe is run, and I must behave in the same way," but only: "This appears to my vision to be immoral, but it cannot really be so; I must behave as, if my vision were perfect, I should see that the hidden powers are really behaving, that is to say, I must not *really* behave as they *apparently* behave."

Kafka is important to us because the predicament of his hero is the predicament of the contemporary man. An industrial civilization makes *everyone* an exceptional reflective K. It was fit and proper that Kafka should have been a Jew, for the Jews have for a long time been placed in the position in which we are now all to be, of having no home. In so far as the criticisms that are made of the Jews are just, they signify only this: that the reflective man, the wanderer, can never find it easy to have faith, but that if he loses it he is lost. What the contemporary anti-Semite sees in the Jew is an image of his own destiny, of which he is terrified; accordingly he tries to run to the same refuge, Race. With neither courage nor hope, he cannot listen to a voice which is equally Jewish and Christian: "There are many places of refuge, but only one place of salvation; yet the possibilities of salvation are as many as all the places of refuge."

W. H. AUDEN

Grammarian's Relish

American English Grammar, by Charles Carpenter Fries. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 321 pages. $2.50.
Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England, by Hans Kurath. Brown University Press. 252 pages. $5.
Pitfalls in English, by Sophie C. Hadida. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 479 pages. $2.

LAYMEN are hardly conscious of the fact that civil war exists among language experts. It is, in fact, the ancient struggle between conservatives and liberals; and it is heartening to know that the liberals are gaining ground.

More exactly, these factions are the traditionalists and the scientists. The traditionalists assume that there is a correctness in the English language as absolute as that in elementary mathematics. The scientists, on the other hand, believe that usage is the only rule, and that the rules of grammar have no value except as statements of facts.

The general public is on the side of the traditionalists. The man-in-the-street believes in absolute right and wrong; he relies on grammars and dictionaries to tell him which is which, he buys popular handbooks of correct English. His unconsciously held creed was voiced for him forty years ago by the late purist, Richard Grant White, who said: "There is a misuse of words that can be justified by no authority, however great, and by no usage, however general."

Now the National Council of Teachers of English, supported by the Modern Language Association and the Linguistic Society of America, have financed an investigation

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into the grammatical structure of present-day American English. The report of this inquiry is made by Professor Fries of the University of Michigan.

It is a fascinating volume. The material examined was derived from three thousand letters written by people of all our social and economic levels. These were arranged in groups according to information concerning their writers. The lower or "vulgar" group contains the nearly illiterate; the upper level, the well educated. The central core comprises the great mass of people in any community.

Analysis of this material did not reveal a new standard to which we should adhere. In casting off ancient chains, there is no intention of assuming new ones. It was revealed that the mark of the uneducated is the poverty of their language; an effective program of language study is necessary. We must agree upon the kind of English it is the obligation of our schools to teach; we must base our teaching on an accurate description of the actual practices of informal Standard English; we must give pupils a practical equipment for the observation of actual usage.

Actually, this is a sort of preliminary to the working out of a new system. It assumes the scientific point of view, repudiating the conventional attitude and ignoring the classification of "mistakes" and "correct forms." Perhaps it is destined to be an epoch-making book.

For usages in American speech as they appear in a single section of the country, we may turn to the "Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England." This is a guide book or index for the three-volume "Linguistic Atlas," which was finished more than a year ago. The handbook outlines the dialects of New England and provides the apparatus for evaluation of materials contained in the Atlas. It is hardly a book for beginners. The necessity for a high degree of accuracy imposed upon the field workers the use of a finely graded phonetic alphabet founded on that of the International Phonetic Association, but with the addition of new symbols. Some day, the linguistic atlas will be extended to include the whole of the United States. Dr. Kurath is at the head of this great project; the committee includes or has included the greatest scholars and experts in the country.

"Pitfalls in English" comes in very pat here as an example of the traditional handbook that is eagerly sought by the public and sternly repudiated by the scientists. This is a revision of a book that has already sold a hundred thousand copies. The author has no doubts about good and bad grammar. For instance, she tells us on page 9 that if you ask a person's pardon, and he answers "Surely," it's bad. But if he answers "Certainly," it's good. She does not say why; it is a Rule.

In fact, she never tells us why; and that is one of the selling points of the book. No technicalities of grammar are allowed. Nothing is said of subject, predicate, infinitive or preposition. The rules are all arbitrary, and remembered by little mnemonic tricks, called Devices. There are ten pages on the difference between "lie" and "lay." She could have saved nine and nine-tenths pages if her rules had allowed her to say that "lie" is intransitive and "lay" is transitive. In the case of "set" and "sit" we are told that it is wrong to say "the dress sets well" or "the setting hen was frightened from her nest." And if that surprises you, says our author, do not argue that your dressmaker and the farmer talk that way; they are authorities on dressmaking and farming, but not on English. Your dress sits well. It was a sitting hen that got scared.

This is a shining example of the sort of thing the scientific grammarian is out to abolish. Relief is in sight. The dress, and the hen, and the sun shall yet be allowed to set in the schoolbooks as they do everywhere else in creation.

TED ROBINSON

1919

Aftermath, by Jules Romains (Men of Good Will, Vol. IX). Translated by Gerard Hopkins. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 481 pages. $2.75.

FRANCE FALLS, London is bombed, our whole world trembles over the abyss and the ninth volume of "Men of Good Will" comes out almost on schedule. It is a volume very much like the others, except that it seems quieter and rather more pedestrian. Partly this may be the result of a deliberate plan, the author having decided that after the thunders of "Verdun" it was time to give his readers a breathing space. But the plan either miscarried or was carried too far, and the breaths of relief are likely to end as yawns.

Like the preceding volumes, "Aftermath" is divided into two contrasting books or sections. The first deals with Quinette, a character who had appeared at the far-off beginning of the novel and then had been reintroduced from time to time so that we shouldn't forget him. A bookbinder by trade, he dabbles in murder as a fine art and a sexual satisfaction; during the War he has killed almost as many women as Landru. Now that the fighting is over, his thirst for killing has been assuaged and his only ambition is to run a fashionable little bookshop in Nice. But something of his past has been discovered by a Dadaist poet named Claude Vorge, who also wants to dabble in the art of murder and who hails Quinette as his master. Quinette takes a mistress; Vorge strangles and rapes her. The title of this first book: "Vorge Against Quinette." Its purpose: to depict the widespread moral disorganization of the year 1919.

The second book deals with Pierre Jallez, a young poet who has so far appeared in every volume of the series. After getting out of the army, he has earned a little money by representing an American newspaper in Vienna, and he now decides to take a long vacation. In Nice he meets a beautiful newspaper seller named Antonia and becomes her first lover. He also forms a sentimental friendship with a young society woman, while analyzing all his sentiments in a private journal. The title of this second book: "The Sweets of Life." Its purpose: to show the happy springtime mood of many young men released from military service. While Vorge and Quinette are deep in vice, Jallez is enjoying unspoiled kisses and rustic wine.

Neither of these two sections is a fair sample of M. Romains' work. He has never been good at depicting really evil characters like Quinette, since he approaches them too much in the manner of a postgraduate student writing a thesis on crime. Toward Jallez, on the other hand, he seems unduly tender. Jallez is one of the three characters in "Men of Good Will" who are apparently privileged to speak for the author, the other two being Maykosen (who represents

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Romains as the confidant of statesmen) and Jerphanion (who represents the more practical side of Romains in his youth). Jallez also represents the author's youth, but the part of it that is most introspective and poetic. For that reason, his commonplace views on politics, art and music are particularly annoying. He treats poor Antonia with middle-class condescension, telling himself that she is really quite intelligent in spite of being poor. "I know that she will never forget the experience; that if I play my cards properly and follow the prompting of my own heart, it may color the rest of her life with beauty, may be for her a beam of memory striking deep into the darkness of her path through the future." What a conceited little snob he is, and what a prudent citizen. Though he is supposed to be enjoying the springtime of his life, he is as calculating about his emotions as if he were a chemist mixing perfumes.

At the end of the book, Jallez is setting out for Geneva, where he has been offered a post in the League of Nations. That brings back the principal theme of the novel, the fight to prevent another war. We can expect that after this temporary halt, the next volumes will move faster. But it really is a halt, make no mistake about that. I cannot imagine anyone's beginning the series with "Aftermath" and then going on with it. On the other hand, those who are familiar with earlier and better volumes are not likely to be discouraged.

MALCOLM COWLEY

Popular Books on Greece

The Ancient Greeks, by William Kelly Prentice. Princeton University Press. 261 pages. $3.
Greek Popular Religion, by Martin P. Nilsson. New York: Columbia University Press. 184 pages. $2.50.
The Economics of Ancient Greece, by H. Michell. New York: The Macmillan Company. Cambridge, England, at the University Press. 415 pages. $4.

IN THE LAST THIRTY YEARS there has been a continuous series of attempts on the part of scholars to write an intelligible account of the main problems of the ancient world or such aspects of these problems as seemed of importance in the scholar's present, and to do so in a way adapted to intelligent people who were not classical scholars. Perhaps at no time since the Renaissance has the attempt been more worth making; certainly at no time since then has there been a greater chance for a large number of people to benefit from a book on a classical subject.

But to be successful, this kind of popular book must avoid two dangers; it must not exhibit the slick facility which multiplies entertaining generalizations around the subject matter without ever digging into it; and it must not be dull, with the methodical dullness which, in the effort to capture an honest accuracy, fails to draw distinctions with the boldness and even crudeness indispensable to a first understanding of an unknown subject. The scholar must come out flatfooted for his opinions, while his mind is still full of the reservations and doubts with which the more detailed knowledge of his subject imbues him.

Furthermore, in any popular book on classical antiquity there are special difficulties inherent in the material. The life and history of both Greece and Rome have been the yeast of the modern world. They are so much ourselves that we cannot avoid confusing ourselves and them. Yet historically, philosophically and socially we know inconveniently little about them with the kind of accuracy which would be regarded as necessary in a study of other branches of history and philosophy. Thus they constitute, from the point of view of the scholarly writer of the popular book, material unique in kind. Veiled in myths to which anyone trained in classical literature is a conscious and unconscious victim, the great men of Greece and Rome and their opinions and the life of their times show through with a vivid, startling familiarity. Yet any scholar must mistrust his judgment and examine the grounds for it many times before he can be sure that he is honestly considering the facts and not substituting that part of himself that is the outgrowth of Renaissance enthusiasm, eighteenth-century classical code and nineteenth-century philological criticism. The three books here reviewed represent three different results of this common attempt.

Professor Nilsson has made a most satisfactory investigation of a subject matter which he has gathered from a number of sources, from inscriptions, and incidental references in literature, and inferences to be drawn from direct statements in literature. He establishes convincingly that a sharp line of demarcation can be made between the beliefs of the bulk of the people of Greece at any time, and those of the poets, philosophers and historians who are so often taken as typical of their age. Nilsson's thesis, specifically, is that certain views on witchcraft, magic and hell, and what we are accustomed to consider the grossest forms of superstition overlaid on a definitely Christian theology, were endemic in popular belief long before Christianity, in fact from the time of Homer on. Furthermore, he demonstrates that there is a great deal more in common between the Greek peasant of today, with his Christian beliefs, and his forbear in the fifth century before Christ, with his pagan faith which is ostensibly so different from Christianity, than between the latter and Aeschylus, Sophocles, Thucydides or Socrates. The book is clearly and coherently planned, and written in a direct and lucid style, without bogus scholarly ornament.

Mr. Prentice's book has a number of good things to be said for it. It is an honest effort to make out what the Greeks amounted to, historically and politically. It raises a number of important questions and provides some interesting and a few probably correct answers. But it fails to be a good popular work on the subject, because Mr. Prentice himself is not sure what he is aiming at. He has not quite abandoned the academic practice of quoting secondary sources, but his quotation of such sources is entirely inadequate if the book is to be regarded as a regular academic work of scholarship. Furthermore, out of a queasiness and uncertainty respecting the scholarly difficulties involved, the author fails to take account of many questions which any intelligent layman would ask at once. For instance—what part was played by the new economic factors in the creation of the Greek tyrannies in the sixth century; or, what was the nature of the party system which gradually came into being in Athens during the fifth century; or, what kind of shift in political leadership is represented by the change from Pericles to Cleon, a matter which the contemporary fifth-century writers think crucial. Most important of all, Mr. Prentice has failed to mark off for investigation any particular section of his subject. Even

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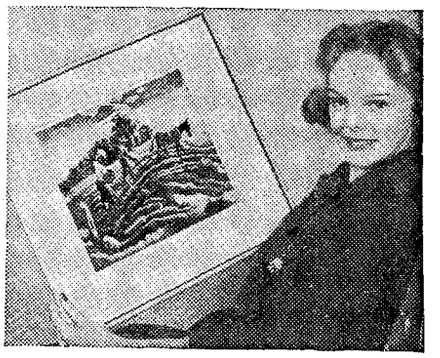

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where the information is significant it fails to fit into any indicated scheme.

In his study of Greek economics, Mr. Michell has taken account of all the facts available, and, a much rarer achievement, he tells us where he gets these facts. His treatment of Greek agriculture is especially clear and, to my knowledge, has nowhere been duplicated. Nor can it be said that he does not draw conclusions from his accumulated data. The procedure is painstaking, thorough and capable. But there is a kind of tediousness in it which is not easy to locate. I think Mr. Michell was, honestly, not very much interested in the Greeks except as a case study presenting special difficulties for the investigator. So, where his material gives out, he has no imaginative picture of Greek civilization as a whole, no vivid sense of the lives of the people.

These three volumes illustrate, respectively, the right sort of scholarly popular book and the two most typical divagations from it. Nilsson has written both accurately and interestingly; his work is valid both for the specialist and the larger audience. Prentice tries to be both scholarly and popular, and out of vagueness and lack of direction misses both boats. Michell has done a good scholarly job without ingenuity or wit and is consequently useless for those who are interested, but not professionally. DAVID GRENE

Dark and Bloody Ground

Robespierre and the Fourth Estate, by Ralph Korngold. New York: Modern Age. 439 pages. $3.75.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION offers one of the richest biographical quarries in all history, for men were projected as giant figures against that lurid glare. Robespierre was among the resonant half-dozen that have sometimes served for canonization and sometimes been used to frighten naughty children. Ralph Korngold has looked into the history of his rise and fall in estimation and reports the tide is turning back to a fuller appreciation of his abilities, weaknesses and the monstrous forces that operated on and through him. He was a lawyer and amateur thinker. With the fatal calling of the Estates General he went up to Versailles and very quickly was astride the whirlwind, which he rode longer than any of those other popular figures.

The thesis of the book is given in the title: Robespierre was one of the first and certainly the most powerful to appreciate the true direction of the social changes being brought about by this period of turbulence. As one faction after another moved from left to middle to right; as, on the other hand, the mobs, the hothead intellectuals and bloody adventurers pushed farther toward violence and anarchy, endangering the unity in action of the best men ranged on the Mountain, Robespierre constantly used his enormous prestige and thunder in the tribune to adjust the revolution to the needs not only of the nation but of its lower classes. Under the influence of Rousseau, he had got a firm belief in the paramount rightness of the people, and throughout he held that liberty and equality were shibboleths unless they applied to economic equality. Mr. Korngold suggests that too many historians have thought overmuch about how the heads fell, about how ruthless Robespierre could be in open insurrection and how politically discreet in being out of the way in such matters as that of the petition and massacre that almost wrecked the Jacobin club, about his frequent reliance on the unreliable. Robespierre and what he stood for, in that early time of blood and bewilderment, could not very well have been understood until today. In the light of history and the slow advance of world thought, he is a remarkable figure.

As is always the case, Mr. Korngold a little exceeds himself on the side of defense. In the early part of his career, Robespierre had a very handy gift of landing on his feet, and this is sometimes described and proved as acumen or strength by the too easy biographer's process: *if* A, and *if* B, what more natural than that, etc. Whereas later, in misfortune, the spot he is put in or the chance he misses is traced (accurately, though) to the personal villainies of his enemies. On the whole the picture is fair. The man was weak in many things—sometimes in those very things, such as the single fixed purpose, the asceticism, the humorless, self-sustaining, night-and-day effort, which made it possible for the obscure country lawyer to direct national affairs in a time of unbelievable national calamity. And the counter-revolution of Thermidor is not to be explained so easily as it is here. Of course Robespierre in those five years had more than expended a life's working time of energy. He could have resigned, himself, but he also resigned the ideal he held for France; yet he never stirred for it, or gave the charge of action to St. Just.

But these things must always rest upon your if, and in general this is a sound book, well thought out and well sprinkled with quotations and with cross-checks on the things that were thought and said in that time and of it later. Its only drawback as good reading is one inevitable to the subject: short of giving the complete portrait of the man and assuming an intimate knowledge of one of the most complicated studies in history, you must forsake your hero every other turn of the way for a hit-or-miss treatment of the French Revolution. There are a bibliography and an index. OTIS FERGUSON

Contributors

RIDGELY TORRENCE is the author of several books of verse and of a number of plays for the Negro theatre. Macmillan will publish a new volume, "Poems," this spring.

EDMUND WILSON is the author of "Axel's Castle," "To the Finland Station" and other books of criticism, poetry, drama, fiction and current history.

WALTER PACH, the distinguished American painter and etcher, is the author of "Vincent Van Gogh: The Man and the Artist."

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W. H. AUDEN is the well known English playwright and poet, now living in this country.

TED ROBINSON, for many years the columnist of The Cleveland Plain Dealer, is the author, among other books, of "Piping and Panning" and "Enter Jerry." He has contributed to Life, The New Yorker, The Saturday Evening Post and other magazines.

DAVID GRENE, formerly of the Classics Department at Trinity College, Dublin, is giving courses in Greek and comparative drama at the University of Chicago.

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